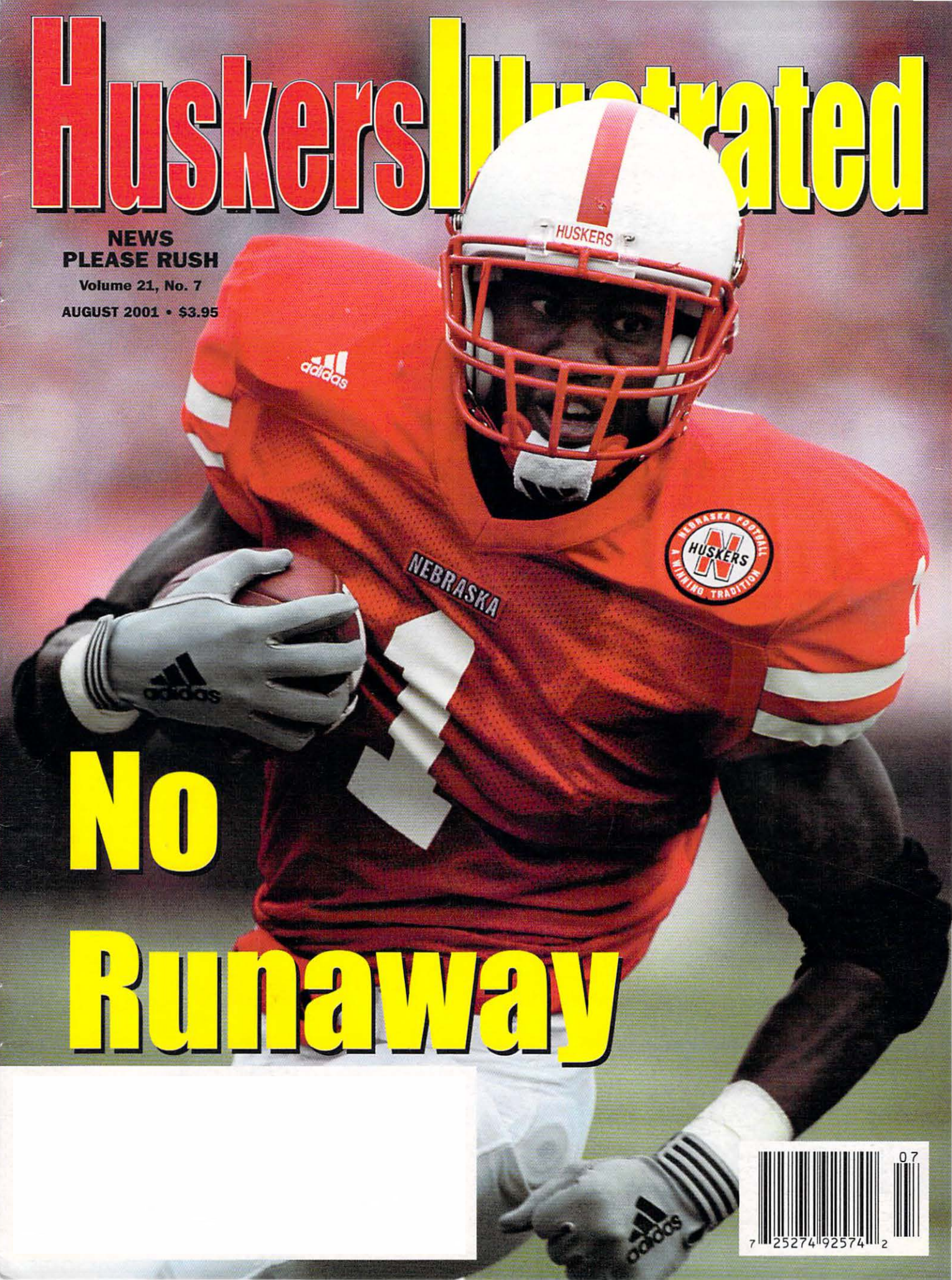


Huskers Illustrated

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Volume 21, No. 7

AUGUST 2001 • \$3.95



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champion (chăm'pē-on)

n. 1. A winner of first place in a competition. 2. One who shows marked superiority.



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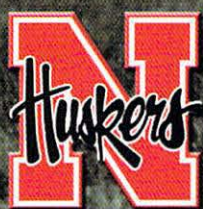
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Sept. 28	Baylor	7 p.m.
Oct. 5	Missouri	7 p.m.
Oct. 7	Kansas	1 p.m.
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Sept. 26	Iowa State	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	Missouri	7 p.m.
Oct. 6	Oklahoma (Devaney)	TBA
Oct. 17	Brigham Young	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	Kansas	7 p.m.
Oct. 17	Texas	7 p.m.
Oct. 27	Kansas State	TBA
Nov. 7	Texas A&M	7 p.m.
Nov. 17	Baylor	7 p.m.
Nov. 21	Colorado	7 p.m.



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Nowhere To Run

TCU's strong defensive performance leaves Huskers with unusual numbers



Brian Hill

IT WAS an unusual site. Eric Crouch getting tackled in the backfield before he could get going.

For a passing team, it might not be that unusual to see 55 yards in losses on a quarterback's statistics. But only 19 of Crouch's yards lost came on sacks.

To put the total in perspective, Crouch was tackled for losses totaling 137 yards in 1999 and 148 last season.

The lost yardage severely cut into his game totals. He finished with a net of 69 yards, despite having runs of 42 and 33 yards.

So the season opener was far from an artistic success. In fact, it was downright ugly for much of the game.

Perhaps the most difficult statistic to believe was the Huskers' second quarter rushing total — minus-20 yards. That from the team that led the nation in rushing a year ago.

A 98-yard drive near the end of the third quarter did help the offensive numbers somewhat, but the final totals were still very un-Nebraska-like — 159 yards rushing and 310 yards in total offense.

The bright spots were the passing game — 151 yards — and the defense. The Blackshirts, who had a lot of doubters in the preseason, held TCU to just 56 yards rushing and 186 yards in total offense.

And give the opponent a little credit. Despite being a 30-point underdog, the Horned Frogs conceded nothing to the fourth-ranked Huskers and made some nice adjustments after Nebraska drove 70 yards to score on its opening possession.

The offensive line took much of the heat for the opening-game performance, but perhaps everyone expected too much too soon from a unit that lost three players with a combined 81 starts.

ON THE COVER

I-back Thunder Collins sprints toward the end zone on a 6-yard touchdown run on Nebraska's first possession. Photo by Scott Bruhn

Another week of practice and this week's game against Division I newcomer Troy State should provide an opportunity to fix some of the problems before Notre Dame comes to town the following week. The Huskers will have the experience of two games at that point, while the Irish will be playing their opener.

Speaking of Troy State, the Trojans are on the schedule this season and next because TCU backed out of a three-game series with Nebraska four years ago.

The Horned Frogs finally made it to Lincoln and provided a stiff opening test. You'll find complete coverage of the Pigskin Classic inside this edition . . . and much, much more.

With the Huskers playing eight home games this season, we begin a series of "Great Games at Memorial Stadium." Also, contributing editor Mike Babcock takes a look at the evolution of the

rover position at Nebraska.

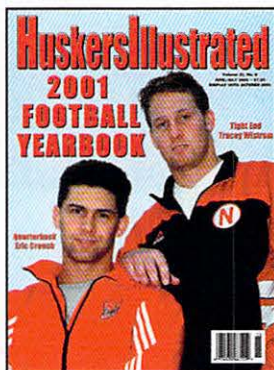
Those of you familiar with our website will probably recognize the new bylines on our recruiting coverage. Doug Horwich and Rick Shaw are very active participants on huskersillustrated.com and will now provide coverage in our magazine.

We offer congratulations to Johnny Rodgers, who was enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame Aug. 11 in South Bend, Ind. Rodgers, Nebraska's first Heisman Trophy winner in 1972, was among 14 players and two coaches selected in April of 2000. They were honored at a ceremony in New York City in December and finally enshrined in August. The honor was long past due.

There's another Heisman candidate this season in Crouch. For him to make a serious run, he'll have to stay healthy and he and the entire offense will have to continue to improve and gain consistency.

Nursing a 13-7 lead late in the third quarter, the Huskers were pinned back against their own goal line by a TCU punt. They responded by driving 98 yards in 10 plays.

That was a very good sign. ■



Huskers Illustrated

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12 Red Rover

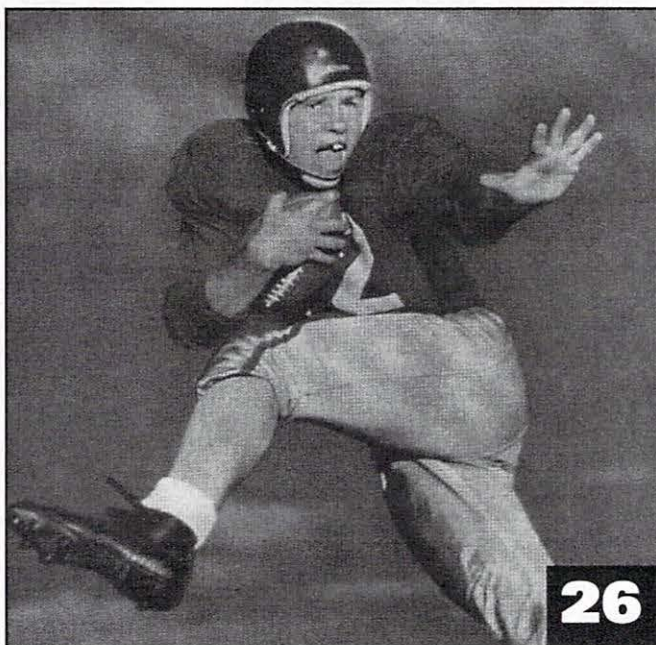
Senior Dion Booker enjoys the additional responsibility of playing the rover position in Nebraska's defense. *By Mike Babcock*

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Captains Lead by Example

Secondary coach George Darlington was discussing Keyuo Craver with reporters about two weeks before the Nebraska football team elected its captains for 2001.

"He's always had real leadership qualities, in players respecting him," Darlington said of the senior cornerback from Harleton, Texas. "He has a very good sense of humor. He's kind of a jokester. And so I think players respect him as a player, but they (also) respect him as a person."

Darlington didn't predict that Craver would be picked as a captain, but he implied it.

"It will be interesting, really, to see who gets elected," said Darlington. "It will be interesting to see the perceptions of the players, as to who they view as most worthy to be captains."

Interesting, yes, but it's doubtful there were any surprises among the assistants or players when Coach Frank Solich announced this season's captains on the Saturday before the TCU game.

Craver was among them, of course, as were defensive tackle Jeremy Slechta, tight end Tracey Wistrom, offensive tackle Dave Volk and quarterback Eric Crouch. And though they were too modest to admit it, the captains themselves couldn't have been all that surprised either.

Craver could have spoken for all five when he said he had committed to being a leader before the one-player, one-vote election, conducted among those who participated in two-a-day practices.

"The coaches told me before the season started that it was my year to be a leader for this team, not just the defense but the team as a whole," he said. "Whether I got captain or not wouldn't have made a difference. I just want to do my best to make sure we get to where we need to be."

Where the Cornhuskers need to be is in the chase for a national title, he said, and his commitment to being a leader and accomplishing that began during the summer conditioning program.

"This is my last season," Craver said. "I don't want any regrets."

Though it wasn't really necessary, defensive coordinator Craig Bohl took Craver aside after the captains were announced and told him "it's a different role. He told me to take that initiative to separate myself from just being an ordinary player to being a leader," said Craver. "Even when I don't want to be a leader, I've still got to step up and take that role because the guys are following me."

Leadership qualities are essential to a quarterback, so Crouch's election shouldn't come as a surprise, even though he's the first quarterback to be a captain since Mickey Joseph in 1991.



Nebraska captains Eric Crouch (7), Keyuo Craver (3), Jeremy Slechta (56), Tracey Wistrom (87) and Dave Volk (58) surround Coach Frank Solich.

It's human nature for some of the votes to be cast along position lines, which means quarterbacks aren't likely to receive a significant number of automatic votes. There also can be a popularity component, which may or may not influence the outcome in some instances.

Logically, captains are personally popular as well as being leaders.

"I think that over the years I've treated people the way I've wanted to be treated and have led by example, had to motivate in a lot of ways and be a role model for a lot of people," Crouch said. "This is the payment, the paycheck for all the things I've done. It definitely means a lot to me."

"It also means a lot to my family and the people of this state."

Crouch is from Omaha, one of three captains from Nebraska. Volk is from Battle Creek, and Slechta is from LaVista. From Crouch's point of view, as well as from Volk's, growing up in Nebraska makes being chosen as a captain "a little bit more meaningful," said Crouch.

But Slechta disagrees. "It doesn't matter where you're from," he said. "I think once you get down to school here, you figure out how much tradition and stuff are in the Nebraska program. I know all about that stuff, being from Nebraska, yes. But I think everybody understands the greatness of it."

For Wistrom, that understanding runs in the family. His brother Grant was a Cornhusker captain in 1997. Only three other sets of brothers have ever been so honored: Jason (1997) and Christian Peter (1995), Zach (1994) and Erik Wiegert (1991), and Andy (1988) and Mike Keeler (1983).

The Wistrom brothers came to Nebraska from Webb City, Mo.

Except for Crouch, whose position requires that he be vocal, this season's captains have been characteristically more quiet than not, leading by example rather than by words.

"I'm not a real big talker on our team," Slechta said. "I like guys to look at me and think, 'Well, if you watch Jeremy, he's always going hard; he's working hard.' But there are a lot of guys that don't think of me as someone who's going to just get in their face and yell at them. When I'm just with the defense, we're out on the field, I can talk to them. But in front of the whole team I get a little bit nervous."

Volk said he doesn't think making speeches is part of his job description as captain.

"We're sort of a leaderless bunch, the people in the (offensive) line," he said.

If he does have inspire those around him with words, however, "I think I'll just wing it," Volk said. ■

TOUCH OF CLASS

Eric Crouch showed his character in early August after former teammate Bobby Newcombe made disparaging comments about Crouch and the Cornhuskers to a newspaper reporter from his hometown of Albuquerque, N.M., while in training camp with the NFL's Arizona Cardinals.

Newcombe, a sixth-round draft pick, claimed, among other things, that Nebraska intentionally didn't throw the ball to him and that as a result, he lost as much as \$4 million in earning power.

"I wasn't used much," Newcombe was quoted. "I even dozed off on the sidelines at times."

Crouch refused to respond to Newcombe's remarks in kind. "I try and do the right thing," he said. "I never had anything against Bobby. Those are all feelings that are his. I wouldn't say those types of things about him or make comments toward the Nebraska program like he made."

"Of course, he's Bobby Newcombe and he can speak for himself."

Crouch said he wasn't necessarily surprised that Newcombe would say what he had.

"I went out of my way many times to be nice to him, treat him like I would other teammates. And a lot of times I just got the cold shoulder," said Crouch. "At some point, you just have to recognize the situation. I think that he had a tough time with what happened to him (at Nebraska)."

"Things just didn't fall the way he wanted, and I think he had hard feelings for that and blamed it on certain players and this program . . . I never had those type of feelings toward him."

Ron Brown, Newcombe's position coach at Nebraska, also discounted the claim that he was purposely ignored in the offense. "Everybody has their own perspective on things, but from our vantage point, we looked for ways to get him the ball," Brown said. "I think everybody knew — I think it was pretty well publicized — that we wanted he and Eric on the field at the same time."

"I think everyone was in agreement to that."

Brown said the claims in the story came as a surprise to him.

"It's always a surprise when an athlete leaves and speaks in a negative sense about the University of Nebraska," said Brown. "Not that they don't have the right to. But we're so used to hearing positive things. Usually when kids come out of the program, 99.9 percent of the kids have had a lot of good things to say, at least publicly. But everybody does have a right to their own opinion."

Newcombe completed his undergraduate degree in three years, a "remarkable thing," Brown said. "A lot of us tried to support him with his interests and loves and his personality. I don't have any hard feelings at all. I thank God for the opportunity I had to be around him."

"And again, I hope as he looks back at it all, he feels the same way." ■

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

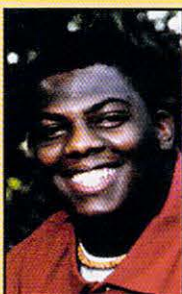
NO STELLA

Randy Stella and Josh Brown were notably absent from the TCU game. Brown will be back with the team for the Troy State game and again competing with freshman Sandro DeAngelis for the No. 1 place-kicking job. Stella, however, will not play in what would have been his senior season.

It appeared that Stella would be allowed to return after Coach Frank Solich suspended him prior to spring practice for an unspecified violation of team policy. He could rejoin the team, Solich said, if he met certain requirements. The decision on that was to be made before two-a-days began.

Stella, the team's second-leading tackler and starting weakside linebacker in 2000, participated in summer workouts, but the day before practices began, Solich announced during a news conference that the talented Stella would not be allowed to return. He declined to elaborate or offer specifics.

Brown was held out of the opener, and not included among the 105 who went through two-a-day practices as a result of an off-the-field incident during the summer.



Le Kevin Smith

SMITH SIDELINED

Highly regarded freshman scholarship recruit Le Kevin Smith might have played this season. The 6-foot-3, 295-pound defensive tackle from Macon, Ga., is "the type of player that could play his first year in any program in the country," Coach Frank Solich said when the freshmen reported.

But Smith was forced to take a redshirt after undergoing surgery on his right knee.

Smith had an MRI on the knee the first day freshmen practiced, which revealed a torn ACL and cartilage damage that could be traced to a pick-up basketball game during the off-season in Macon, according to Solich. Then he "apparently aggravated it in the weight room back home about a week before he came here. (We) thought he was feeling good when he showed up," Solich said.

Smith's test scores reinforced that belief. He was among three freshmen who scored more than 2,000 points in the performance index, which takes into account an athlete's size as well as his scores. His 2,122 points were second only to I-back Marques Simmons' 2,179 points.

Smith was timed in the 40-yard dash in 5.07 seconds. While he was stretching for the newcomers' first practice, however, he "felt it catch a little bit and so from that we did an MRI," said Solich.

Smith isn't the only member of the Cornhuskers' scholarship recruiting class to miss the season. Defensive backs Danieal Manning and Daniel Bullocks failed to meet the NCAA's freshman eligibility requirements and weren't among the newcomers who reported for two-a-days.

Bullocks has come to Lincoln, however, and was scheduled to begin practicing on the Monday after the TCU game. His twin brother Josh was among the 105 who reported early.

Daniel Bullocks was Nebraska's allotted one partial qualifier.

Antwon Guidry, another defensive back in the Cornhuskers' announced scholarship-recruiting class for 2001, indicated he would enroll at Hutchinson, Kan., Community College.

IN MEMORIAM

Two members of the Nebraska team that played in the 1941 Rose Bowl game passed away over the summer. Roy Petsch, a quarterback who came from Scottsbluff and was nicknamed "Cowboy," died in April in Phoenix. Warren Alfson, an All-America guard from Wisner, died there in June. Petsch was 82. Alfson was 86.

HONORS CANDIDATE

Junior forward Christine Latham was one of 13 nominees for the 2001 Hermann Trophy. The Hermann, college soccer's equivalent to the Heisman Trophy, honors the nation's outstanding male and outstanding female collegiate soccer players. ■

Special Request

Freshman quarterback makes call before taking number he's worn since eighth grade



Mike BABCOCK

A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, Mike McLaughlin placed a telephone call to Jan Berringer in Goodland, Kan. The call was important to McLaughlin, essential, in fact.

He was planning ahead, preparing for his first Nebraska football season, and he needed to discuss something with Jan Berringer, the mother of the late Brook Berringer.

McLaughlin, a scholarship quarterback recruit from Millard North High School, planned to request the same jersey number he had worn since the eighth grade when he reported to Nebraska for the start of practice in late July. But he wouldn't request it without Berringer's permission.

He could have requested the number without making the call. He was told he could. But he decided he wouldn't feel right wearing the number unless Jan Berringer said it was OK.

The number in question, of course, was the 18 Brook Berringer wore during his Cornhusker career. No Nebraska quarterback has worn a No. 18 jersey since he died in the crash of a light plane he was piloting in the spring of 1996 — McLaughlin entered the eighth grade that fall.

McLaughlin was at an impressionable age, and Berringer had impressed him.

But then, Berringer impressed so many who knew him, or felt as if they knew him from watching him perform on football Saturdays. Some athletes shy away from the responsibility of being role models. He seemed to embrace it, earning the admiration of old and young alike.

He came off the bench to lead Nebraska to the Big Eight championship in 1994, after Tommie Frazier, the starter at the beginning of the season, was sidelined by blood clots. They then combined to direct the Orange Bowl victory that produced Tom Osborne's first national title.

After that, Berringer returned to relative anonymity as Frazier's back-up in 1995, accepting his role without complaint even though he could have been a starter in many programs.

His career completion percentage of 59.3 is second only to Jerry Tagge's 59.9 among Cornhusker quarterbacks who attempted 100 or more passes. Given the opportunity, and a slightly different offensive emphasis, he could have challenged most of the school passing records.

Berringer's skills first attracted McLaughlin's attention and caused him to wear a No. 18 jersey, even though he is an option quarterback. Berringer "was always my idol when I started to look at Nebraska football and coming here," McLaughlin said. "I always respected what he did."

The two never met, though "I think I got his autograph once," said McLaughlin.

Even so, he sensed what others knew. "Besides being a great football player and athlete, he was such a great person. Everything he did, you know, going to hospitals and so forth . . . I really admired him for that, everything he did around the community," McLaughlin said.

"You've got to give stuff back, and he really did."

McLaughlin plans to emulate Berringer in that respect. It is "what I always really wanted to do," he said. "If I came down here, I told myself that I'd give back to the community. That's what I'm looking for this first year, to do as much community service as I can and see where it takes me."

McLaughlin won't be unique among those in his recruiting class in that commitment. Most Cornhuskers are involved in the community by the time they finish. So in

that sense, he simply reflects the best in a program that occasionally gets maligned because of the actions of a few.

McLaughlin is unique, however, in bringing such an attitude with him.

To some extent, that attitude is evidence of Berringer's legacy, so it is fitting that he will wear a No. 18 jersey — which brings us back to the telephone call to Jan Berringer.

After signing a letter of intent, McLaughlin began thinking about requesting No. 18. Senior Jeff Hemje wears the number, but he plays cornerback, meaning it would still be available for an offensive player to wear. So McLaughlin got the coaches' go-ahead and then made the call.

"I wanted to ask her permission," he said, explaining that he didn't want Jan Berringer to "look out there and see another (Cornhusker)

quarterback with No. 18 and . . . get sad and so forth."

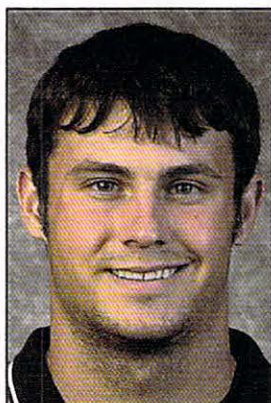
Jan Berringer's initial reaction was, "it's really up to the coaches."

But McLaughlin needed more. "I was just so surprised with his sensitivity about that," Jan Berringer said. "That he thought of that, he must have outstanding character."

His concern about her feelings was well-placed. "It won't be easy," she said.

But she's willing to accept that burden because of McLaughlin's call. "Not a lot of 18-year-olds would think of that," she said. "His mom must have done a good job."

Those who knew Brook will tell you she knows something about that. ■



Mike McLaughlin was an all-state quarterback at Millard North.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at mdb@inetnebr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.



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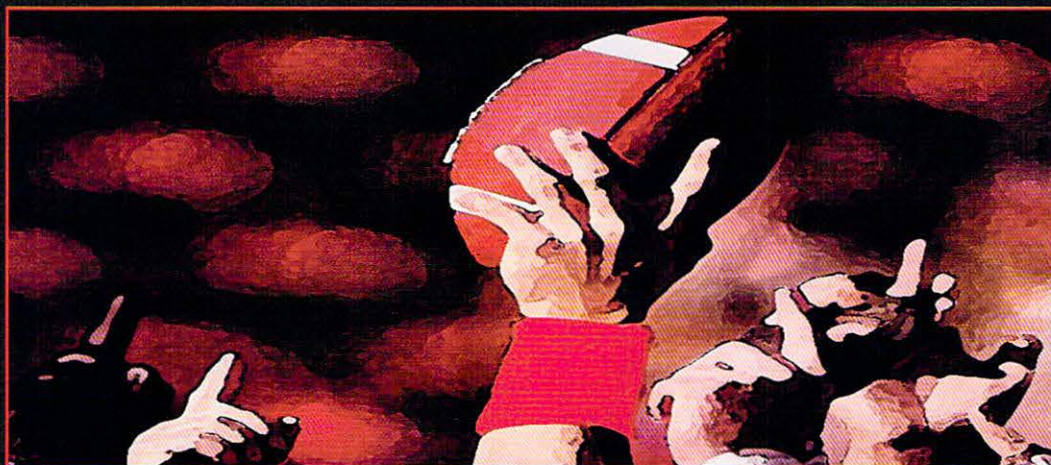
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Ready For Redemption

**Blackshirts determined to strike back
after disappointing season**



**Terry
DOUGLASS**

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE a college football expert to realize that something was missing from Nebraska's defensive play last season. Despite fielding some very talented players, it just wasn't the same swarming, pad-popping, ball-hawking unit that Cornhusker fans — and opponents — have come to expect over the years.

To be more precise, it simply wasn't a Blackshirt-like performance. And don't think that Nebraska's defensive players didn't notice. They did.

Nebraska's Mark Vedral is one of the returning Blackshirts bent on redemption. The Huskers' senior weak-side linebacker said the thing that bugs him most about last year's defense was that it "wasn't very physical."

"With the Blackshirts, we need to be recognized as being a physical defense, a defense that's going to force turnovers and just give our offense great opportunities to score more points," Vedral said. "We really didn't do that well last year and it really showed. We've taken it upon ourselves to be more physical and make big plays I think that's really going to be a key to success to our football team this year."

Nebraska junior rush end Chris Kelsay also took last year's relative defensive struggles to heart. He's thought about it plenty during the offseason and said he thinks he knows how to remedy the situation.

"We've just got to get mad this year," Kelsay said. "We've got to re-establish the Blackshirt mentality."

As Kelsay sees it, Nebraska's current defensive players aren't just playing for themselves or this year's team.

"It's not just our team that we were letting down last year. We were letting down every Blackshirt that ever came through here at Nebraska," said Kelsay, whose older brother, Chad, is among the Blackshirt alumni. "You've got to keep that in the back of your mind. When you're out there playing, you're playing for all the Blackshirts. It's all or nothing — do your job, do it at 110 percent or stay on the sidelines. That's the kind of attitude we're going to take this year."

Nebraska's veteran players have seen first-hand a couple of prime examples of Blackshirt defense. In fact, the 1999 Cornhusker defense, spearheaded by defensive backs Mike Brown and Ralph Brown, will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the best in the program's history.

However, it was the Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter-led defense of the '97 national championship team that defined what a Blackshirt was for Nebraska's DeJuan Groce. The junior cornerback said that after watching the '97 Blackshirts scrimmage against NU's No. 1 offense during a recruiting visit, he decided Nebraska was the place for him to be.

"It was practice, and it was ones vs. ones and they were going at it and I mean going at it hard," Groce said. "It was nothing but thunder. It was like boom, boom, boom, and I was like, 'wow, I want to be part of this.'"

So it's easy to understand why Groce and his teammates came away disappointed after last season. Nebraska allowed three of its final four regular-season opponents to score 29 points or more, as the Huskers limped to a 2-2 finish.

The 19.4 points per game that Nebraska allowed in 2000 were the most given up since 1958. Opponents gained an average of 322 yards of total offense against the Huskers, which was their worst mark since 1991.

Nebraska finished the season ranked 26th nationally in scoring defense, 26th in total defense and 27th in rushing defense (113.7 yards per game).

It's easy to make excuses for last year's edition of the Blackshirts, which fielded inexperienced players at several positions. Injuries took their toll, especially on the interior defensive line. Several Huskers readily admit that poor tackling was another factor.

Despite losing five starters from last year's unit, including All Big 12-caliber performers like middle linebacker Carlos Polk and rush end Kyle Vanden Bosch, the Huskers figure to be much more experienced this year. Eight players return with starting experience. Although none of those players are sure-fire All-Americans, NU senior defensive tackle Jeremy Slechta said this year's edition of the Blackshirts might grow into college football's version of the No-Name Defense.

"This defense is kind of a blue collar defense, and we all look at it that way," Slechta said. "We've got a bunch of guys, and we all feel like we're pretty good. You might not see our names in the newspapers, magazines and on TV all the time, but we feel that we have a good defense with a lot of guys that, as a unit, will work together and play good football."

Vedral agreed.

"We're not out here to try and be the all star or be the best individually," Vedral said. "We want to be a good defense as a unit. That's something we really focused on this summer and in the spring. We've got to have unity, but then everybody has also got to take care of their own responsibilities."

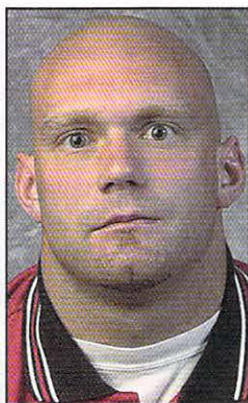
And if they don't, Kelsay said it's crucial that the Blackshirts hold each other accountable for each and every mistake.

"It doesn't matter who it is, if somebody gets on my case, great," Kelsay said. "If I have to get on somebody else's case, then that's just the approach we've got to take. We're going to be a no-holds-barred defense, and it's something that everybody in the nation is going to realize after this season."

That remains to be seen, but Nebraska Coach Frank Solich said he's pleased with what he's seen so far.

"I like the fact that it will be an aggressive defensive football team," Solich said. "They will get after you, and they'll get after you with speed, so those things have encouraged me. They're excited about getting it going, and they know what it means to play great defense."

Blackshirt defense. ■



**Linebacker Mark Vedral
says the defense must
be more physical.**

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the Grand Island Independent. He can be reached at tdbdouglass@netzero.net.

Big Year For Big 12

*It won't be easy for the conference
to live up to its advance billing*



**Curt
McKEEVER**

IF YOU PICKED UP a preseason college football magazine or recent sports page, you surely know how Big 12 Conference football is being ballyhooed.

It's not a question of whether it's the best league in the land, but how much better it is than the other power conferences.

"We're all privileged to be in this conference right now," Colorado Coach Gary Barnett said. "You've got five or six teams in this conference that can compete for a national championship, and there's not another conference that can say that."

Five or six national title contenders may be stretching things a bit. But when the coach's preseason poll came out, three Big 12 teams — Oklahoma, Nebraska and Texas — were in the top six. And Kansas State was 11th.

Oklahoma could give the nation a big clue about the league's strength this week, as it plays at Air Force. Given Fischer DeBerry's wishbone offense, that's always a tough early season task.

But if the league is really the creme-de-la-creme, then other teams will step forward. Also this week, Colorado plays Colorado State, Kansas faces Southwest Missouri and Missouri plays host to Bowling Green. Those are all pick-'em games, but if the Big 12 wants to live up to its tag, the Buffaloes, Jayhawks and Tigers all better win.

Despite the preseason polls, Texas, bolstered by top-ranked recruiting classes two of the past three seasons, is the pick of many preseason publications to win its fourth national championship.

But to do that, the Longhorns will have to dethrone the reigning champ Sooners, who blasted Texas 63-14 last year and have 16 returning starters.

Of course, there's Nebraska, which nearly won its fourth national crown in six years during the 1999 season.

The Cornhuskers might not be No. 1 like they were at the start of 2000, but with the league's best offensive player in fourth-year starting quarterback Eric Crouch, and a favorable schedule, they've got a realistic shot of making it to the Rose Bowl.

Behind that trio are Kansas State, which has won 11 games each of the past four seasons, and Barnett's Colorado team, which has underachieved in his first two years but showed last November it could be ready to break through by nearly knocking off the Huskers in Lincoln.

"It is a physical, hard-hitting, fast-paced league," said Colorado offensive guard Andre Gurode, with a maniacal grin. "It's not meant for everybody."

"It may not be as fast as the SEC, and we may not throw the ball all over the place like the Pac-10. But when you play a Big 12 team, you know you've played a physical team."

While the Southeastern Conference has a legitimate title

contender in Florida, the Gators look like they're head above shoulders from any other team in that league.

The Pac-10 also has a couple of national title contenders in Oregon State and Oregon. But the rest of the league has almost turned upside down.

It's hard to take the Big Ten seriously, as Northwestern, which Nebraska clocked in the Alamo Bowl, has been deemed the favorite.

And while Miami and Virginia Tech could make runs out of the Big East, a lot of folks in Atlantic Coast Conference country are saying this is the year to get Florida State.

Back in the Big 12, there's a belief that teams like Iowa State and Texas Tech could more than handle themselves in most other leagues.

"The magnificent exposure we get from this conference is amazing," said ISU Coach Dan McCarney. "When you get out a long, long, long ways from Big 12 country, that's when you really find out."

"Every head coach is saying this is probably the best coach in the country. I said it last year — it looked that way at the end of last year and I'm hoping it'll be that way again this year. It's a special place to be."

Texas Tech safety Kevin Curtis agreed.

"I've been a Tech fan even from the Southwest Conference days. The Big 12 has added another dimension," he said. "Bringing Oklahoma, Nebraska, K-State — that just makes it more interesting. You've got a lot of top schools, and we want to get in there."

No one is picking Terry Allen's Kansas team to make it near the top of the league this season. But Allen, who sits on the hot seat after four straight losing seasons, would gladly settle for a spot just outside the elite.

"You win six games in the Big 12, you're going to a bowl game," he said. "It's a great recruiting tool. We have 27 players who are from the state of Texas. We didn't have that when we were in the Big Eight."

Allen still believes it's more difficult to build a program in the Big 12. For starters, most schools have stronger traditions than KU. And the ones that don't are starting to receive greater commitments from their administrations.

At Oklahoma, they're boldly talking about winning a second straight crown. If the Sooners do, they can take pride they didn't have to come through the back door to earn it.

That's how OU wide receiver Josh Norman felt just after the Sooners beat Florida State in the past Orange Bowl.

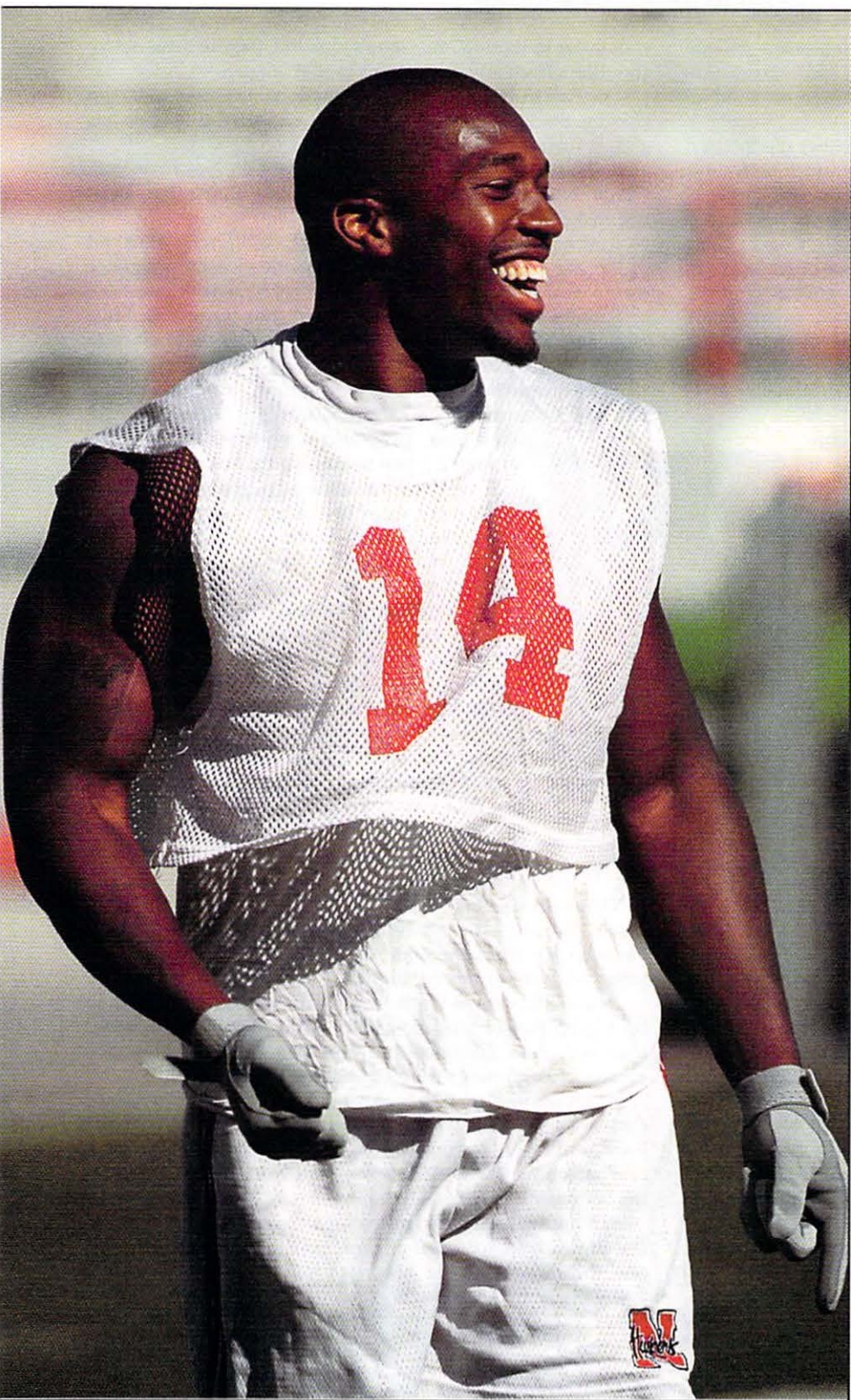
"To know that you went through the schedule you did in the Big 12 and to say that you won the national championship through the Big 12 says a lot about this conference and your team," he said. ■



**Kansas Coach Terry Allen
would settle for a spot
just outside the elite.**

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

Red



Husker senior Booker likes 'being in the mix' at new position

By Mike Babcock

The heart of a linebacker beats in Dion Booker's chest. That's why the Cornhusker senior has embraced the opportunity to play rover after spending three seasons at free safety.

He still plays free safety on some downs. But he prefers rover.

"I like being in the mix," he said. "At free safety, I don't feel like I'm in the mix as much."

In Nebraska's defensive system, the free safety is more concerned with pass coverage than with run support.

As a result, "you're not as aggressive as you are as a rover," said Booker.

"You're mostly in the deep middle, covering someone else's back."

The deep middle means the free safety is well off the line of scrimmage. And back there, "I don't feel like I can control anything. I've got to wait until everything develops and then react to it," he said. "At rover, I think I can develop things. I'm controlling what's going to happen."

The rover is in control, literally, making certain the secondary is properly aligned when the ball is snapped.

To do that, he must know everyone else's responsibilities.

Also, he must be able to adapt, to assume the roles of others. He is a kind

Dion Booker started seven of the first eight games at free safety in 2000 and led the Huskers with eight tackles in the Alamo Bowl victory over Northwestern. He was a finalist for the 2001 Lifter of the Year award.

Scott Babin

Rover



George Darlington (right), beginning his 16th season as secondary coach, says Nebraska's rover "literally is an adjuster . . . He lines up in different situations."

of defensive Renaissance Man, taking on blockers, who are often much heavier, and dropping in coverage on swift receivers. "He's going to line up all kinds of different places," defensive coordinator Craig Bohl said.

"Sometimes he's almost going to be a linebacker. Sometimes he's going to be like a cornerback. Other times he's going to be a deep safety. He roves around and does a lot of things."

Hence the designation "rover," a term that gained currency at Nebraska in 1993, around the time the Cornhuskers were making the transition from a "50" defense to a 4-3 base

alignment.

From 1987 through 1992, media guides refer to Nebraska's safeties as "free" and "strong." Prior to 1987, the Cornhusker secondary included a safety and a monster — in addition to two cornerbacks. The term monster dates to the late 1960s, soon after NCAA rules were amended to allow free substitution and two-platoon football. Before that, Nebraska's safeties were referred to simply as right and left.

To some degree, the monster back is a stage in the evolution of the rover.

However, the Cornhusker defensive

philosophy has changed over the years, meaning the two positions aren't necessarily interchangeable. Neither can be precisely described as a strong safety, either.

The monster back "was kind of a role player. He didn't have a lot of physical skills," said Bohl, who played the position at Nebraska before injury problems cut short his career. "He was just kind of a tough guy. Now you've got to be a tough guy with a lot of physical skills (to play rover)."

The secondary "played a lot more zone (coverage) then, and the monster back was just kind of a flat defender, a shallow contain guy," Bohl said. "Now, our rovers have to be much more."

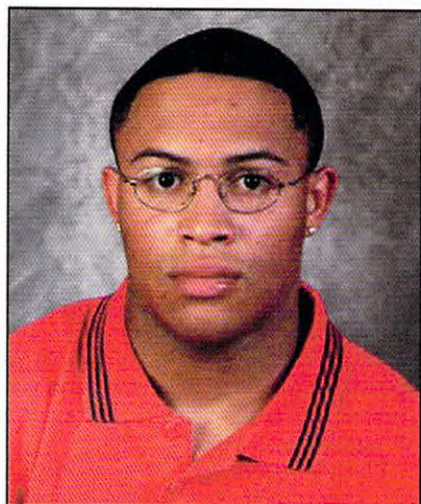
Even so, run support remains the rover's primary responsibility, a fact reflected statistically since the monster position became the strong safety. In every season but two since 1987, a strong safety — and now a rover — has led the secondary in tackles. And in four of those years he has led the team.

Safety Mark Blazek led the secondary in tackles in 1987, and cornerback Keyuo Craver was the Cornhuskers' leading tackler in the secondary last season, tying for third on the team.

Otherwise, strong safeties and rovers have dominated defensive back tackle statistics. Rover Mike Brown led the team in tackles for three consecutive seasons (1997-99) and, of course, finished as the school career leader in tackles. Strong safety Steve Carmer led the team in tackles in 1991.

Defensive backs coach George Darlington decided to replace the "strong safety" designation with "rover" because "in our scheme, our rover may play where a traditional free safety would play," said Darlington. "And our free safety often plays where a traditional strong safety plays."

Depending on the coverage, an NFL scout watching Nebraska practice might even mistake the free safety for the strong safety, Darlington said. "Our rover literally is an adjuster. He's a rover. He lines up in different situations. So it really made no sense to call him a strong safety."



Mike Brown led the Huskers in tackles for three straight seasons as a rover.

"The rover plays sometimes like a free safety and sometimes like a nickel back."

If the positions were to be accurately identified, the Cornhuskers would have a rover and a safety, according to Darlington. "We really should drop the term 'free,'" he said.

Despite coverage responsibilities, the rover has more in common with a weakside linebacker than with a cornerback. Perhaps the best evidence of that was the move of rover Mike Minter to weakside linebacker late in 1996 season, after Terrell Farley was dismissed from the team.

With less than two weeks of practice, Minter was able to step in and play the position, not only because of his athleticism but also because of the

similarities in the two positions. "Both of those men ought to be very good tacklers. And they ought to be excellent blitzers," said Darlington.

Both positions also require excellent speed. Rovers, in fact, should be "should be among, if not the fastest men on our defense, either the rover or the free safety," said Darlington.

"Mike Brown was not the fastest, but he was a fabulous player, and he had good speed. Mike Minter and Toby Wright were probably as fast as anybody we had on defense."

Wright was the starting rover in 1993. All three went on to play in the NFL.

Redshirted freshman Lannie Hopkins has gone the other way. During the spring, he was moved from weakside linebacker to rover, where he figures prominently in Darlington's plans. He "can really run," Darlington said. He's a "very physical guy, an excellent tackler, (with) excellent size."

"He's a player with a world of potential to play either in the secondary or at linebacker."

Booker hasn't switched positions. Rather, he has added rover to his resume.

"It was my decision," he said. "Coach Darlington never really talked to me about it. We had good players but we weren't making the plays at rover that we should have last season. I felt that I could make those plays. So I made my mind up when it came to winter conditioning, I was going to get bigger and work on more man-to-man so I could tell Coach I wanted to play the rover position."

"We haven't had that strong presence since Mike Brown left, and I want to bring it back."

Booker, who rotates at both safety positions, has gained some extra muscle so he can hold his own on run support. "I knew I had to get bigger. I mean, you can't play rover at 180," he said.

He also has tried to develop a hard edge. "You've got to have that meaness come out of you because you're going against some 250-pound backs," he said. "A 250-pound back, you know you don't have the advantage. You've got to have some toughness. People are counting on you to clog up that hole."

Those words reflect his linebacker's heart. In fact, given the opportunity, "I'll learn the linebacker position, too," said Booker. "All I want to do is play. Where you put me, that's up to you."

"I just want to play. I want to be in the mix. I don't want to be 30 yards down the field." ■

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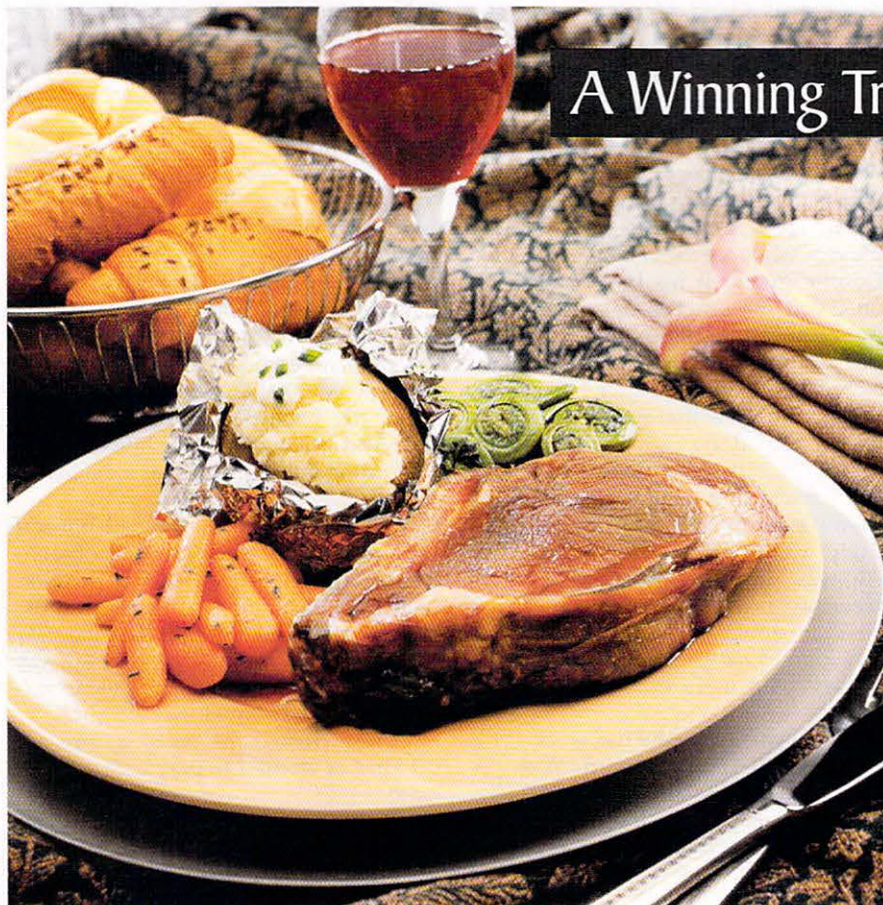
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Worth the Weight

Junior guard Cody regains bulk, gets back in the mix

When Wes Cody reported for pre-season practice in the late summer of 1998, as a member of Coach Frank Solich's first scholarship recruiting class, Milt Tenopir was surprised. And not pleasantly.

Cody was in good physical condition, but he weighed less than 240 pounds, causing Tenopir and Dan Young, the offensive line coaches, to look twice. Tenopir couldn't believe what he saw.

"We thought we had made a mistake," Tenopir said of the would-be offensive lineman.

Cody weighed at least 265 pounds — he claims as much as 280 — during his senior football season at Fremont, Neb., Bergan High School. And that was among the factors in the Cornhuskers' interest in him. They aren't in the habit of offering scholarships to 240-pound offensive linemen.

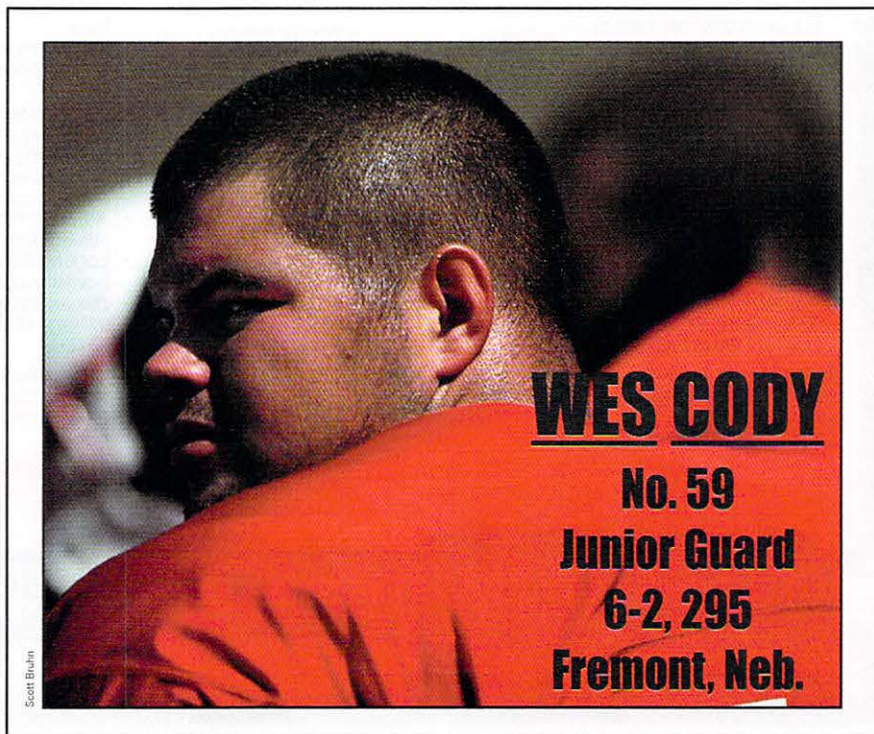
Even though Cody would sit out a redshirt season, as most of Nebraska's offensive linemen do, it took considerable effort on the part of Tenopir and Young to envision a future lineman. He had the strength but not the bulk. "We didn't know where we were going to play that skinny butt," said Tenopir.

He and Young decided to try Cody, an offensive tackle in high school, at center. Cody had never played center, but because of his weight and the fact that the center is often uncovered — meaning no defensive lineman is directly across from him — they thought that might be best.

Even at center, however, the 6-foot-2, 240-pound Cody was likely to be overmatched by major college defensive linemen, whether uncovered or not when the ball was snapped.

Cody quickly discovered why the weight was important, from first-hand experience as a scout-team center. During practice, he often found himself matched against Steve Warren, the Cornhuskers' 305-pound junior nose tackle. Warren "was just throwing me into the backfield," said Cody.

He had gained — regained, actually — some weight during that first sea-



son, but not nearly enough. Playing center was "kind of new, a learning experience," he said. "You've got the nose guard about 3 centimeters away from you, waiting to jack you. You snap the ball, and it's Steve Warren."

Warren didn't cut him any slack. It was nothing personal, of course. Those who labor in anonymity on the scout squad are supposed to give top-unit players what coaches call a good look. Despite giving it his best shot, Cody often left the practice field frustrated. But he never got discouraged.

"You knew sooner or later your technique would get better," he said.

Plus, he knew that sooner or later he would be done with scout-squad duties.

In the spring of that first year, the center experiment was dropped, and Cody was moved to offensive guard. He was grateful for the change in scenery. "I wasn't getting the center position down too well," he said. "I was kind of happy to move to guard. I picked it up more quickly than I did center."

Three years later, he has worked his way into the mix at guard. With the departure of Russ Hochstein, and after a season spent backing up Toniou Fonoti, Cody is finally getting to play.

"He'll play an awful lot of ball for us this year," said Tenopir.

Cody weighs 300 pounds, give or take a couple, or about eight pounds lighter than when he reported a year ago and about five pounds lighter than when he was a sophomore in high school.

His weight problem the first year and a half at Nebraska was of his own creation. During the summer after his senior year in high school, he lost a lot of weight on purpose, he said, in hopes that the coaches might give him a chance to play defense — or at least consider it.

He had earned Class C-2 all-state recognition as a defensive lineman from the Omaha World-Herald, after all. And Michigan even showed some recruiting interest in him as a defensive player.

He might have envisioned himself as a rush end, but the Nebraska coaches certainly didn't. Such a position switch never crossed their minds. "Nobody was looking at me for defense," Cody said. "They knew I was going on offense, and they were surprised I had dropped that weight."

Cody created the problem himself. "I kind of wanted to play defense," he said.

Why, he was asked. He paused before answering and smiled.

"I don't know what I was thinking," he said. ■

Nebraska 21

TCU 7



Nebraska rush end
Demoine Adams (98) and
middle linebacker Jamie
Burrow combine to stop
TCU tailback Ricky
Mason. The Blackshirts
limited the Horned Frogs to
56 yards rushing.

Defense Doe

With offense sputtering, motivated Blackshirts clamp down on Frogs

By Mike Babcock
Photos by Scott Bruhn

Those who have expressed concern about the Nebraska football team's defense could be credited with an assist in the Cornhuskers' 21-7 victory against Texas Christian in the Pigskin Classic.

"If anything, I think a lot of our guys took energy from that, with a lot of attention being put on the defense in a negative way," strongside linebacker Scott Shanle said after the Blackshirts and their backups limited TCU to six first downs, 186 total yards and one broken-play touchdown.

If not for that defensive effort, there might have been some anxious moments for a crowd of 77,473 at Memorial Stadium. As it was, however, there was little real concern of an upset after the Cornhuskers took a 13-7 lead on a six-play, 55-yard touchdown drive near the end of the first quarter.

TCU had only one series on the Nebraska side of the 50-yard line during the final three quarters, and that because the Horned Frogs recovered a fumbled punt by Keyuo Craver.

The opportunity to tie the score, or even take the lead, quickly dissolved under Nebraska's withering defensive pressure. TCU ran three plays, was penalized for holding and forced to punt. "The defense deserves a lot of credit," offensive tackle Dave Volk said. "They won the game for us."

"I thought our defense played extremely well," said Coach Frank Solich.

So did TCU's defense, after yielding a touchdown on the Cornhuskers' first possession. Quarterback Eric Crouch and I-back Thunder Collins, playing for a suspended Dahrran Diedrick, made it look easy, carrying a combined five times on a six-play, 70-yard drive, capped by Collins' 6-yard run.

Just over five minutes into the

game, it appeared the rout was on.

But the Horned Frogs made some defensive adjustments and frustrated Nebraska, which managed just 310 total yards, including 159 rushing — the lowest total since the third game of the 1999 season. The Cornhuskers struggled that afternoon, too, gaining only 119 yards on the ground.

Nebraska's rushing total would have been more typical had it not been for 69 yards in losses. TCU freshman strong safety Marvin Godbolt led the tackles-for-loss assault with five.

More than once, Crouch found himself in the clutches of a defender before he could get himself set to make a decision about whether to pitch the ball or keep it. Though he took a pounding, he retained his sense of humor. "I didn't walk off the field limping, so I'm pretty excited by that," he said.

Crouch, who became Nebraska's career total offense leader with a 28-yard pass to tight end Tracey Wistrom in the fourth quarter, earned the respect of TCU Coach Gary Patterson.

"Crouch is the real deal," said Patterson. "When he had to, he made plays."

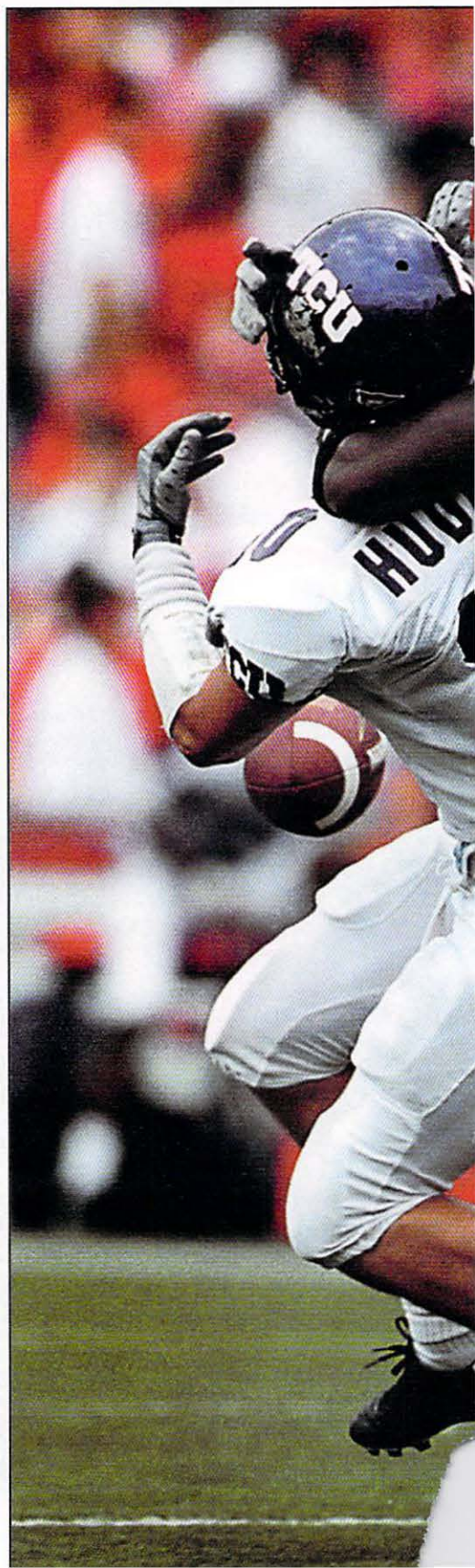
Two of the biggest were a 41-yard pass play to wingback John Gibson, on third-and-7, to set up the Cornhuskers' second touchdown, and a 42-yard run in the drive to their third touchdown.

Crouch finished with 10-of-18 pass completions, for 151 yards with one interception.

Collins rushed for a game-high 71 yards and two touchdowns on 14 carries in his first start at Nebraska. The junior from Los Angeles "did an excellent job," Solich said.

"I certainly want to praise him for

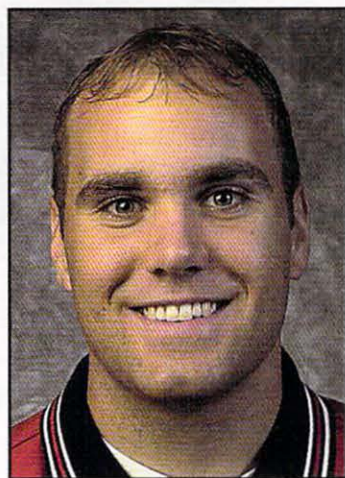
Lornell McPherson, a redshirt freshman cornerback seeing his first action, makes sure TCU's Shane Hudnall can't catch this pass.



sn't Rest



Husker Player of the Game



Kyle Larson

New Punter Gets Respect

Kyle Larson took eight stitches for the team in Nebraska's opening-game victory. The sophomore punter was preparing to make a tackle on his first career punt when he was blindsided.

The facemask on the Texas Christian player's helmet went under his facemask and did the damage. "The guy kind of jacked me under the facemask," Larson said with a smile.

"I got a pretty good shot on him, too."

Larson's contribution to the victory went well beyond that, however. He averaged 48.6 yards per punt on eight punts, five of which left the Horned Frogs inside their own 20-yard line.

Larson, who succeeds Dan Hadenfeldt, was quick to share his success with his teammates. "I give a lot of credit to those guys up front," he said.

Any nervousness he felt was eased on that first punt, which went 56 yards and led to his getting the stitches.

He was in position to make the tackle. But someone else got there first. Even so, his teammates were impressed by the stitches. "They were actually pretty proud of me," he said.

"I was getting some props for that." ■



Middle linebacker Barrett Ruud (38) chases TCU's Ricky Madison (above). Ruud, one of three true freshmen to see action, contributed five tackles, as the Husker defense held the Horned Frogs to 186 total yards. One of the biggest plays by the defense came in the second quarter, when strongside linebacker Scott Shanle (right) recovered a fumble forced by teammate Chris Kelsay to stop a TCU threat.



coming in like he did under the circumstances, not only taking care of the ball but getting some yards where it didn't look like there was much daylight."

Despite the efforts of Crouch and Collins, the Cornhusker offense could never get untracked. Solich credited TCU's defense, "but we certainly need to get a lot better offensively in terms of getting things coordinated," he said. "We had too many plays against us that were minus-yardage."

Nebraska's ball carriers were dropped for losses 15 times in 50 attempts.

TCU fared even worse. The Cornhuskers had 12 tackles for losses on 28 TCU rushes, with 37 of the Horned Frogs' 56 net rushing yards

coming on two plays. "Overall, I thought the defense played well today," said weakside linebacker Mark Vedral, one of three first-time Blackshirts.

"We'd like to have that one touchdown back so we could have gotten the shutout. But that gives us something to work on when we watch the film come Monday, and get ready for Troy State."

The Cornhuskers' defensive success was attributable, in part, to a fresh front, achieved by rotating tackles and rush ends — six of whom saw action during the first half.

"That's always a difficult thing to do," defensive coordinator Craig Bohl said. "You're in the first quarter and you're playing guys that are actually your third-team guys. But it's some-

thing, I think, we've learned through the years. We're going to be a four-quarter football team."

The rush ends and defensive tackles "played awesome today, flowing to the ball," said Vedral, who played without a break. "Those guys hit their gaps. They hit them hard, really messing that pocket up. They deserve a lot of credit. All of those guys that played did a great job."

TCU's lone touchdown came on a 67-yard pass play from quarterback Casey Printers to tight end Matt Schobel, on a second-and-14 midway through the first quarter. Printers reversed his field under pressure and found Schobel, who had worked his way behind the secondary.

"We gave up the one big play, which

4TH & 1 INCHES

Notes And Quotes From The TCU Game

RUUD, TWO OTHER TRUE FRESHMEN SEE ACTION

Nebraska used only 62 players against TCU, including three true freshmen: middle linebacker Barrett Ruud, rover Philip Bland and wide receiver Mike Stuntz — recruited as a quarterback.

Ruud, in particular, received attention from reporters afterward because he's from Southeast High in Lincoln. But all three played early in the game, with the outcome still in doubt.

"Since Wednesday, it's been flying by, really," said Ruud, who was credited with five tackles. "I didn't think about it a whole lot until Thursday night. I was kind of in knots, nerves. But it went pretty well. I don't really get too excited until right before the game, right before the kickoff."

Nebraska won the toss and elected to defer until the second half, which meant Ruud was immediately on the field as a member of the kickoff team. He was in the middle of the up-front players. "I definitely like doing that instead of going in that first series after not doing anything," he said.

Late in the first quarter, he and Bland got in the game on scrimmage downs. "There were a couple of times where I screwed up making the calls," said Ruud. "But I had guys who watched my back out there, too. Luckily, a lot of guys out there are veterans."

"All the older guys that have experience are looking out for the younger guys," said senior weakside linebacker Mark Vedral, who was playing his first game as a Blackshirt.

"It was great. It felt good out there," he said.

SEVERAL HUSKERS MISS OPENER

Junior Thunder Collins got his first start at I-back as a Cornhusker after Coach Frank Solich suspended junior I-back Dahrran Diedrick for one game, following his arrest for incident involving disturbing the peace and failure to disperse. Diedrick will play against Troy State.

Diedrick watched the game from the Nebraska sideline, in street clothes.

Junior place-kicker Josh Brown also was suspended for the opener, as a result of misdemeanor assault in an off-season incident involving a former girlfriend. In Brown's absence, redshirted freshman Sandro DeAngelis handled the place-kicking duties. He was No. 1 on kickoffs, anyway.

In addition to Collins and DeAngelis, seven other Huskers started for the first time: center John Garrison, guard Jon Rutherford, tackle Dan Waldrop, fullback Judd Davies, middle linebacker Jamie Burrow, free safety Willie Amos and punter Kyle Larson.

Those who didn't play because of injuries were weakside linebacker T.J. Hollowell (ankle), cornerback Erwin Swiney (ankle), fullback Paul Kastl (foot), tight end Kyle Ringenberg (shoulder), I-back Robin Miller (hamstring), middle linebacker Tony Tata (knee), offensive guard Jon Dawson (knee) and rush end Tyler Toline (knee). Tata, Dawson and Toline were not among those who reported early.

CROUCH PASSES FRAZIER ON TOTAL OFFENSE CHARTS

Quarterback Eric Crouch is now Nebraska's career total offense leader. The senior from Omaha rushed for 69 yards and one touchdown and completed 10-of-18 passes for 151 yards to surpass Tommie Frazier on the Cornhuskers' all-time list. Crouch has 5,510 yards. Frazier had 5,476.

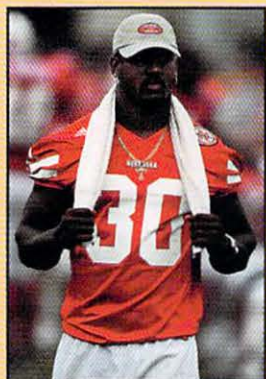
The record-breaking yardage came on a 28-yard pass play to tight end Tracey Wistrom.

The senior from Webb City, Mo., caught three passes for 38 yards. He now has 40 career receptions for 865 yards to rank third all-time among Cornhusker tight ends in both categories.

Crouch and Marvin Godbolt, Texas Christian's redshirted freshman strong safety, were chosen as the NACDA Pigskin Classic "Most Valuable Players of the Game." Each will receive a \$5,000 post-graduate scholarship from the NACDA Foundation. Godbolt had five tackles for 37 yards in losses.

SPLIT END THOMAS HAS BEST GAME

Junior split end Wilson Thomas had one career reception going into the game. He now has four, after catching three passes for 53 yards. His catches were for 11, 20 and 22 yards. ■



Dahrran Diedrick watched from the sidelines after being suspended for the opener.

nobody's happy about," Shanle said. "We had one big breakdown, and other than that we played pretty good. But no one's going to relax on this defense. They scored seven points, and the mindset is, they shouldn't have scored any points."

Last season, the Cornhuskers allowed, on the average, 19.4 points per game, the most since 1958. "There were times last year when you turned on the film and we looked like we were in quicksand. We didn't look real fast," said Shanle. "I think we've got a different attitude (now), a different mindset. If we can continue to get better every week, there will be good things from this defense."

And the negative attention Shanle has sensed will dissipate. ■

2001 Schedule

(Team's current record)

1	Aug. 25	TCU (0-1), W 21-7
2	Sept. 1	Troy State (0-0), 11:30 a.m., Fox Sports Net
3	Sept. 8	Notre Dame (0-0), 7 p.m., ABC
4	Sept. 15	Rice (0-0), 6 p.m., FSN
5	Sept. 29	@ Missouri (0-0), TBA
6	Oct. 6	Iowa State (0-0), TBA
7	Oct. 13	@ Baylor (0-0), 1 p.m.
8	Oct. 20	Texas Tech (0-0), Homecoming, TBA
9	Oct. 27	Oklahoma (1-0), TBA
10	Nov. 3	@ Kansas (0-0), TBA
11	Nov. 10	Kansas State (0-0), TBA
12	Nov. 23	@ Colorado (0-0), 2:30 p.m., ABC
	Dec. 1	Big 12 Championship at Irving, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC

Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

Sept. 1	Troy State (0-0) at Nebraska
Sept. 8	at Middle Tennessee State
Sept. 15	Appalachian State
Sept. 22	Nicholls State
Oct. 6	at Miami (Fla.)
Oct. 13	at Mississippi State
Oct. 20	Cal State-Northridge
Oct. 27	Southern Utah
Nov. 3	at Maryland
Nov. 10	at Louisiana-Monroe
Nov. 17	Jacksonville State

Sept. 8	Notre Dame (0-0) at Nebraska
Sept. 15	at Purdue
Sept. 22	Michigan State
Sept. 29	at Texas A&M
Oct. 6	Pittsburgh
Oct. 13	West Virginia
Oct. 20	USC
Oct. 27	at Boston College
Nov. 3	Tennessee
Nov. 17	Navy
Nov. 24	at Stanford

Big 12 at a Glance

Saturday, Aug. 25 Nebraska 21, TCU 7 Oklahoma 41, North Carolina 27
Sunday, Aug. 26 Fresno State at Colorado
Saturday, Sept. 1 Troy State at Nebraska

Colorado vs. Colorado State, Denver
Bowling Green at Missouri
Southwest Missouri at Kansas
Oklahoma at Air Force
Oklahoma State at Southern Mississippi
New Mexico State at Texas
McNeese State at Texas A&M

Game 2

Troy State Sept. 1

Location: Troy, Ala.
Enrollment: 6,630
2000 record: 10-2
Coach: Larry Blakeney,
first year
Series: First meeting



11:30 a.m. (Fox Sports Net)
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln

Trojan to Watch

Senior Demontray Carter, the 2000 Southland Football League's Newcomer of the Year, returns as the featured tailback after rushing for 804 yards and accounting for more than 1,200 yards in all last season.



The Pensacola, Fla., native is a versatile weapon who can catch the ball out of the backfield and get the tough yardage inside.

Quick Facts

The Trojans aren't exactly taking it easy in their "transition year" into Division I. In addition to facing Nebraska in Lincoln, Troy State plays at Miami (Fla.) and Mississippi State.

With eight players returning who have started games, this year's defensive unit will be one of the most experienced the Trojans have had in years. The unit boasts solid depth at every position, prompting defensive coordinator Wayne Bolt to redshirt all of the team's newcomers except safety Arthur Adams and defensive lineman Demarcus Ware.

"We like the personnel we have," Bolt said. "We believe this group can keep us in some games and be one of the best we've ever had."

On Deck

Notre Dame Sept. 8

Location: Notre Dame, Ind.
Enrollment: 10,301
2000 record: 9-3
Coach: Bob Davie, fifth year
Series: Tied 7-7-1



7 p.m. (ABC)
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	9	Wilson Thomas**	6-6	215	Jr.
	9	Ben Zajack	6-0	210	Fr.
LT	58	Dave Volk***	6-5	300	Sr.
	76	Chris Loos*	6-3	310	So.
LG	77	Toni Fonoti**	6-4	340	Jr.
	78	Mike Erickson	6-4	300	Fr.
C	52	John Garrison**	6-4	285	Jr.
	53	Matt Shook*	6-2	300	Jr.
RG	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
	59	Wes Cody*	6-2	295	Jr.
RT	68	Dan Waldrop*	6-5	330	So.
	69	Nick Povendo	6-3	300	Fr.
TE	87	Tracey Wistrom***	6-5	240	Sr.
	99	Aaron Golliday**	6-4	285	Jr.
QB	7	Eric Crouch***	6-1	200	Sr.
	10	Jammal Lord*	6-2	215	So.
FB	4	Judd Davies*	6-0	240	So.
	45	Steve Kriewald	5-10	255	Fr.
IB	30	Dahrran Diedrick**	6-0	225	Jr.
	1	Thunder Collins*	6-2	190	Jr.
WB	8	John Gibson***	6-0	195	Sr.
	89	Troy Hassebroek**	6-4	220	Jr.
PK	22	Sandro DeAngelis	5-8	195	Fr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chris Kelsay**	6-5	270	Jr.
	92	Justin Smith*	6-4	260	Jr.
NT	70	Jason Lohr***	6-2	275	Sr.
	55	Jon Clanton**	6-2	280	Jr.
DT	66	Jeremy Slechta***	6-6	285	Sr.
	85	Casey Nelson**	6-2	285	Sr.
RR	98	Damaine Adams**	6-2	235	Jr.
	95	J.P. Wichmann**	6-4	230	Sr.
SLB	43	Scott Sharlie**	6-2	235	Jr.
	47	Ira Cooper	6-2	220	Fr.
MLB	48	Jamie Burrow**	6-1	245	Sr.
	38	Barrett Ruud	6-2	220	Fr.
WLB	9	Mark Vedral***	6-1	210	Sr.
	23	Blanchard Johnson*	5-11	205	So.
LCB	3	Keyuo Craver***	5-10	190	Sr.
	28	Pat Ricketts*	5-11	180	So.
FS	27	Willie Amos*	6-0	185	So.
or	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
ROV	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
	40	Lannie Hopkins	6-2	205	Fr.
RCB	5	DeJuan Groce**	5-10	190	Jr.
or	16	Erwin Swiney***	6-0	185	Sr.
P	19	Kyle Larson	6-0	205	So.

TROY STATE OFFENSE

WR	3	Heyward Skipper**	6-0	181	Jr.
	5	Jason Samples	6-3	185	Fr.
LT	71	Stan Curington**	6-7	294	Jr.
	60	Henry Tellis	6-5	297	Fr.
LG	61	Robin Lee**	6-2	290	Jr.
	75	Obed Ellis	6-3	265	Jr.
C	57	Trent Garmon*	6-1	313	Jr.
	69	Charlie Goodyear	6-1	272	Sr.
RG	55	Rodney Jordan**	6-4	287	Jr.
	70	Donnie Bostian	6-6	321	So.
RT	76	Branden Hall	6-4	315	So.
	67	Lee Walls**	6-4	282	Jr.
WR	2	Chris Day*	6-0	174	So.
	80	Chad Lucas	6-1	180	So.
QB	11	Brock Nutter	6-1	209	Sr.
	18	Hansell Bearden	6-2	200	Fr.
RB	1	Demont. Carter***	5-10	191	Sr.
	33	LeBarron Black**	5-10	215	Jr.
SLT	19	Calvin Colquitt	5-11	192	So.
	82	Jamaal Smith	5-10	175	Fr.
SLT	87	Daniel O'Brien*	6-1	181	Sr.
	83	Eric Patton	5-10	180	Jr.
PK	12	Drew Boteler	5-9	156	Fr.

TROY STATE DEFENSE

LE	92	Vernon Marable***	6-2	265	Sr.
	99	Shelton Felton**	6-2	250	Jr.
NT	93	Jose Gamboa**	6-1	265	Jr.
	42	Byron Knight**	6-0	276	Jr.
DT	96	Davern Williams*	6-3	283	Jr.
	97	Carlos Stennis*	6-1	280	Sr.
RE	72	Osi Umenyiora**	6-3	267	Jr.
	44	Jordan Lesley*	6-2	223	So.
SLB	45	Jimmy McClain***	6-1	230	Sr.
	41	Robby Farmer*	6-1	220	So.
MLB	46	Nazir Yamini**	5-11	234	Jr.
	48	Ben Waldrop	6-1	225	Sr.
WLB	4	Corey Sears***	6-0	220	Sr.
	32	Gordon Williams**	6-0	220	Jr.
LCB	27	Deiric Jackson**	5-9	183	Jr.
	14	Travis Dunlap	5-8	173	So.
SS	16	Rayshun Reed**	5-10	179	Jr.
	28	Deloise Moore	6-0	205	Jr.
FS	10	Derrick Ansley	6-1	166	Fr.
	15	Ronald Harper*	6-0	171	So.
RCB	24	Freeman White	5-9	160	So.
	38	David Philpaw**	5-8	183	Jr.
P	56	Roger Ridgeway	5-11	185	Jr.

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NEBRASKA vs. TROY STATE

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SEPT. 1, 2001
SPARTANS HIT THE BIG TIME, OR RATHER THE BIG TIME HITS THEM, COURTESY OF THEIR HUSKER HOSTS!

PICKS

TROY STATE AT NEBRASKA

Brian Hill Editor

Nebraska found out what it needs to work on in its season opener. This should be a nice opportunity to fix those things. This should also be a good opportunity for quarterback Jammal Lord and some of the other backups to gain some valuable experience. Speaking of experience, this will be one for the Trojans. **Nebraska 65, Troy State 9**

Mike Babcock Contributing Editor

If Troy State assistant coach Tracy Rocker could suit up, the Trojans' first exposure to NCAA Division I-A competi-

tion might be a little less painful, but only a little less. This could be unpleasant for the visitors. **Nebraska 63, Troy State 0**

Terry Douglass Grand Island (Neb.) Independent Sports Editor

Kudos to Troy State. It probably could've picked a better opponent for its NCAA Division I-A football debut than Nebraska. However, the heat and vanilla play-calling by Cornhusker Coach Frank Solich will keep this one from getting out of hand. Surely the Big Red will be saving its best for Notre Dame. **Nebraska 60, Troy State 7**

Pigskin Classic Nebraska vs. TCU

Aug. 25, 2001 • Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.

Score By Quarters

TCU	7	0	0	0	—	7
Nebraska	13	0	8	0	—	21

Scoring

NU — Thunder Collins 6-yard run (Sandro DeAngelis kick)

TCU — Matt Schobel 67-yard pass from Casey Printers (Nick Browne kick)

NU — Eric Crouch 1-yard run

(Joe Chrisman run failed)

NU — Collins 26-yard run (Crouch run)

Att. — 77,473

Temp. — 75

Wind — north, 14 MPH

Team Stats

	TCU	NU
First Downs	6	16
Rushing	3	9
Passing	2	5
Penalty	1	2
Rushing Attempts	28	50
Yards Gained Rushing	90	228
Yards Lost Rushing	34	69
Net Yards Rushing	56	159
Net Yards Passing	130	151
Passes Attempted	22	18
Passes Completed	11	10
Had Intercepted	0	1
Total Plays	50	68
Total Net Yards	186	310
Avg. Gain Per Play	3.7	4.6
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	2-1
Penalties-Yards	11-85	5-46
Punts-Yards	11-493	8-272
Avg. Per Punt	44.8	48.6
Punt Returns-Yards	5-21	9-69
Interceptions-Yards	1-15	0-0
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	2-34	2-52
Possession Time	26:02	33:58

Individual Statistics

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Collins, T.	14	71	5.1	26	2
Crouch, E.	24	69	2.9	42	1
Grixby, D.	8	15	1.9	8	0
Kriewald, S.	2	3	1.5	2	0
Davies, J.	2	1	0.5	1	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	10-18-1	55.6	151	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Thomas, W.	3	53	17.7	22	0
Wistrom, T.	3	38	12.7	28	0
Gibson, J.	2	44	22.0	41	0
Collins, T.	1	12	12.0	12	0
Golliday, A.	1	4	4.0	4	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	8	389	48.6	56

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Craver, K.	5	42	5.4	19	0
Cornelsen, B.	3	16	5.3	11	0
Groce, D.	1	11	11.0	11	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	2	52	26.0	35	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Burrow, J.	2	6	8	2-3	0	0
Shanley, S.	2	4	6	1-4	0	0
Vedral, M.	2	3	5	1-1	0	0
Ruud, B.	1	4	5	0	0	0
Kelsay, C.	2	2	4	2-3	0	0
Nelson, C.	2	2	4	1-4	0	0
Craver, K.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Booker, D.	1	3	4	0	0	0
Ricketts, P.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Smith, J.	1	2	3	2-10	0	1-8
Slechta, J.	0	3	3	1-2	0	0
Bingham, R.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Groce, D.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Amos, W.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Adams, D.	1	1	2	1-11	0	1-11
Wichmann, J.P.	0	2	2	1-2	0	0
McPherson, L.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Hassebroek, T.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Demerath, T.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Rutherford, J.	0	1	1	0	0	0
Zajack, B.	0	1	1	0	0	0

TCU

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Madison, R.	18	33	1.8	14	0
Printers, C.	7	17	2.4	23	0
Dunbar, L.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Stilley, S.	1	1	1.0	1	0
Connally, C.	1	0	0.0	0	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Printers, C.	10-21-0	47.6	122	1
Stilley, S.	1-1-0	100.0	8	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Madise, A.	4	46	11.5	29	0
Dunbar, L.	3	14	4.7	9	0
Hudnall, S.	2	7	3.5	7	0
Schobel, M.	1	67	67.0	67	1
Madison, R.	1	-4	-4.0	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Biasatti, J.	11	493	44.8	55

PUNT RETURNS

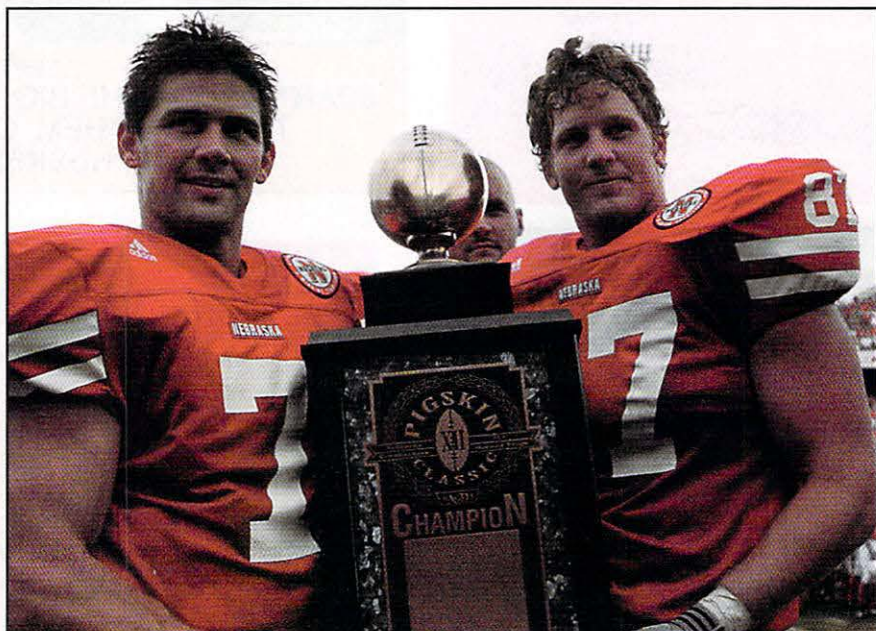
Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Goss, J.	3	17	5.7	11	0
Williams, T.	2	4	2.0	4	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Springfield, B.	1	19	19.0	19	0
Connally, C.	1	15	15.0	15	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
McDonald, L.	7	1	8	4-16	0	1-4
Hilliard, K.	5	3	8	0	0	0
Owens, C.	3	3	6	0	0	0
Goddolt, M.	5	0	5	5-37	0	1-11
Goss, J.	4	1	5	0	1-15	0
Pollard, B.	2	3	5	1-1	0	0
Evans, R.	3	1	4	0	0	0
McCarthy, C.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Bayer, C.	1	3	4	2-7	0	0
Turntine, J.	3	0	3	1-4	0	1-4
Davis, D.	2	1	3	1-1	0	0
Goolsby, J.	1	2	3	1-2	0	0
Roach, N.	1	2	3	0	0	0
Peoples, C.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Pugh, C.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Johnson, B.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Schobel, B.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Dunbar, L.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Smitherman, J.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Boerckel, A.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Sanders, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Williams, T.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Brazel, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Walker, M.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Higman, J.	1	0	1	0	0	0
Roberts, B.J.	0	1	1	0	0	0



Captains Eric Crouch (left) and Tracey Wistrom display the Pigskin Classic trophy.

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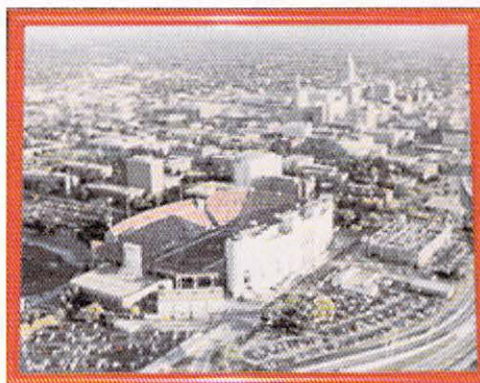
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Worth the Trip

Nebraskans were eager to settle a score with Missouri in 1950

By Mike Babcock

The boys had saved for months to make the trip from Mullen to Lincoln for the Nebraska-Missouri football game. One borrowed his dad's car for the long drive through the Sandhills.

They left in the early morning darkness on the day of the game, which was to begin at 2 p.m.

Near Aurora, the long-planned road trip stopped abruptly when their car was in collision with a State of Nebraska truck, hauling snow fence to be put up in anticipation of the winter's first storm.

The car was sufficiently damaged that it had to be towed into Aurora, where the boys were treated for minor injuries at the hospital and released. Undaunted, they bought bus tickets to Lincoln.

Such is the commitment of Cornhusker fans, who traverse great



Bobby Reynolds led the way as Nebraska defeated Missouri in an offensive extravaganza in 1950.

distances and accept constantly changing kickoff times without complaint in order to support their team.

And that commitment isn't a recent phenomenon, even though its signature is an NCAA-record, consecutive-game sellout streak that began with Missouri's visit in 1962.

The sellout total now stands at 240 and counting.

The boys from Mullen were headed to Memorial Stadium to watch a Nebraska-Missouri game, too, but it was played 12 years before Devaney's first team lost to the Tigers 16-7.

The date was Nov. 4, 1950, and enthusiasm was high at Nebraska. Not only was it Homecoming, with three dozen members of the team that played in the 1941 Rose Bowl

Great Games at Memorial Stadium

First in a Series



Nebraska continues to enjoy amazing success in the friendly confines of Memorial Stadium. Entering the 2001 season, the Huskers are 81-3 at home the last 13 years and carry a streak of 239 consecutive sellouts. Since it opened in 1923, Memorial Stadium has been the site of many great games. In each issue during the 2001 season, Huskers Illustrated will feature one of those games.

game as honored guests, but second-year head coach Bill Glassford had the Cornhuskers in the national rankings.

On the strength of a 3-1-1 start, Nebraska was in the Associated Press poll at No. 21. And the Cornhuskers had one of the nation's most exciting players, Bobby Reynolds.

The sophomore halfback from Grand Island had burst onto the scene in dramatic fashion, scoring all of Nebraska's points in a 20-20 tie with Indiana at Memorial Stadium and then leading the Cornhuskers to a 32-26 victory against mighty Minnesota at Minneapolis a week later.

Minnesota was Nebraska's nemesis. Teams representing the schools had played each other 31 times prior to 1950, with the Cornhuskers managing only four victories and two ties. Nebraska had won at Minneapolis only once, in 1902, prompting



Bobby Reynolds stands 16th on Nebraska's all-time rushing charts. He rushed for 2,196 yards, 81 of them coming on this touchdown run against Colorado in 1951.

Reynolds to shed tears of joy afterward.

Following a sobering loss at Colorado in the third week of the 1950 season, enthusiasm was rekindled by victories against Penn State and at Kansas. Nebraskans were eager to settle a score with Missouri, which had won five in a row against the Cornhuskers — and eight of the previous nine.

The game offered a brief respite from more substantial matters. United Nations forces were in grave danger as Communist Chinese troops pushed from Manchuria toward North Korea.

"Allies Mauled" said a grim headline in the Lincoln Star the day before the game.

That Saturday night, President Harry Truman was scheduled to make a major policy speech in St. Louis. The speech would be heard by an estimated 66 million on radio and television.

But first, the attention of Nebraskans would be focused on the Cornhuskers' game against Missouri, for which scalpers were getting an astonishing \$12 for single tickets.

Those who didn't have tickets, and wouldn't pay scalpers' prices, could listen on the radio or watch a locally produced telecast on Omaha's

WOW. The KFAB radio broadcast featured Lyell Bremser, whom a newspaper ad described as "the Midwest's greatest football broadcaster."

Blue Howell, a Cornhusker in the late 1920s, assisted Bremser in the broadcast booth.

Although Coach Don Faurot's Tigers brought a 2-2-1 record to Lincoln, they were not to be trifled with. "The Huskers will need every iota of their powerful ground attack to slide by this one," Lincoln Star sports editor Norris Anderson wrote in predicting a 26-20 Nebraska victory.

The Cornhuskers ranked fourth nationally in rushing, averaging 316 yards per game.

Glassford, who vowed to mix in more passing against Missouri, anticipated an offensive show. "It will take at least five touchdowns to win it," he said. "I hope we can produce that many."

Though he claimed he hadn't planned anything special defensively to deal with Reynolds, Missouri's Faurot acknowledged, "We've got to hold him down somehow, that's for sure."

As it turned out, Glassford's estimate of what it would take to win was a bit conservative. Nebraska

needed six touchdowns, including three from Reynolds, to beat the pesky Tigers 40-34.

Two of Reynolds' touchdowns were the stuff of legend.

The first came with 14 seconds remaining in the first half, on a pass from Fran Nagle. Officially, the pass covered 35 yards. But Missouri defenders chased Nagle back across the 50-yard line before he released the ball, which was caught by a diving Reynolds in the midst of more Tigers.

The second came with 7 minutes remaining in the game, on a run. Reynolds was credited with 33 yards on the play. But reporters estimated he ran about 100 yards.

On fourth-and-3, Reynolds took the snap in a single-wing formation, dropped back as if to pass, then tucked the ball away. He gave ground under pressure from four defenders, took off one way, then cut back the other, using timely blocks and determination to find an open lane down the west sideline.

The Star's Anderson called the run "rampant Robert's peerless jaunt."

As dusk settled on the stadium, and after the game had ended, many among the capacity crowd of 38,000 remained, too disbelieving of what they had just seen to leave.

In addition to 74 points, the teams had combined for 1,054 yards of offense.

"This game has turned out to be basketball," Glassford told reporters afterward.

The image Glassford chose was appropriate. Coach Harry Good's Cornhuskers would score only 41 points in a loss at Minnesota to open the basketball season less than a month later.

Defense was a "lost art" in the game, according to Anderson's account in the next day's newspaper. "You could store that phase of this struggle in a medium-size thimble," he wrote.

As they were leaving the stadium, fans began "storing away memories of one of football's most tumultuous struggles," Anderson wrote in the hyperbole of his time.

Presumably, the boys from Mullen were among those to whom he referred. ■

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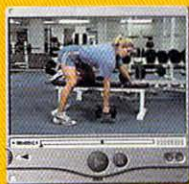


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President Bush honored the Nebraska volleyball team for its national championship and perfect season in a ceremony in the Rose Garden at the White House on May 31.

SIDEOUT

"We can't look back and go off of what we did last year. It's a whole new year, and we're going to have to do new things to win."

— Senior Jenny Kropp

Something Special

'Field trip' to Washington inspires Huskers to aim higher

By Todd Henrichs

The tallest sightseers in Washington last May, members of the Nebraska volleyball team treated their two-day visit more like a class field trip.

They squeezed in a tour of the Capitol and visited all the monuments and memorials. Not even the White House oval office was off limits to the camera-toting undefeated national champions.

They entered at the personal invitation of President Bush, who made good on a campaign promise to surround himself with winners.

However brief, John Cook believes those moments are the bridge between last year's championship and this year's title chase for his Nebraska volleyball team.

The Huskers, top-ranked in the preseason and almost everyone's pick to repeat, even borrowed their new

practice slogan from a former White House inhabitant.

Set in stone on the walls of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial is the famous phrase, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

To senior Jenny Kropp, those are the perfect words to keep Nebraska's focus this season.

"We can't look back and go off of what we did last year," Kropp said. "It's a whole new year, and we're going to have to do new things to win. There will be pressure, but we're going to be able to handle it."

If that proves true, Nebraska might just win in a landslide.

Combined, Nebraska's depth, tal-

ent and experience are virtually unmatched in the collegiate ranks. Headlining the returners is setter Greichaly Cepero, who Cook insists can improve greatly over last year's national player-of-the-year season.

The Huskers have two more returning All-Americans in juniors Laura Pilakowski and Amber Holmquist, one considered among the most dynamic offensive players in the country and the other the nation's leading blocker last season.

Kropp has started for Nebraska for two straight years, establishing herself as one of the Huskers' leading threats in big matches.

But what has everybody in the nation talking is the return of Nancy Meendering from a less-than-satisfying redshirt season. Now married and herself a player-of-the-year contender, Nancy Metcalf is focused on winning a championship at Nebraska she can call her own.

"Sitting there enjoying it with the team was really great, but there was a small part of me that was just like, 'Gosh, I wish I could have been out there with them,'" said Metcalf, who still practiced with the team last season. "But at the same time, it made me feel really good because people said to me, 'You had a part in this and you prepared us for it in practice.'

"In that sense, it made me feel good to know that I kind of made a difference."

After the year off, it will be interesting to watch how Metcalf will blend back in. Sophomore Anna Schrad will also be stepping into a new role, filling the other starting vacancy left after last season.

Like all of her teammates, however, Schrad has started at least two matches in the NCAA tournament and has the confidence necessary to compete for the crown again this season.

Defensive specialist Lindsay Wischmeier is a two-year starter, and Nebraska has even more talent coming off the bench.

With so much to build around, Cook pieced together a challenging schedule for the Huskers this season. They'll play NCAA qualifiers in their first 10 matches beginning with the State Farm Classic and a match against Hawaii, the team Nebraska defeated in last year's national semifinals.

Coincidentally, Nebraska is a mere 10 matches from setting the national record for consecutive Division I victories.

Cook and his Huskers say that isn't a concern and that going unbeaten again will be extremely difficult against a schedule with the likes of West Coast powers UCLA, Long Beach State, Santa Barbara and Pepperdine.

But listen to Cook long enough, and you realize it's clear this Nebraska team wants to do something special.

A year ago, it was an offseason tour of China that established the chemistry and helped build the confi-

dence the Huskers needed to pursue the national championship.

Meeting the president wasn't a bad encore. And it provided some incentive heading into the 2001 season.

The Huskers are intent on finding areas where they can improve. Ball-handling is the No. 1 concern.

"There's a lot of tradition here," Cook said. "If I'm ever going to make my mark as a coach and these players are going to make their mark in this program, they're going to have to do things better than they've been done before.

"That's how you get the best out of them. You keep raising the bar." ■



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Summer Camps Pay Dividends

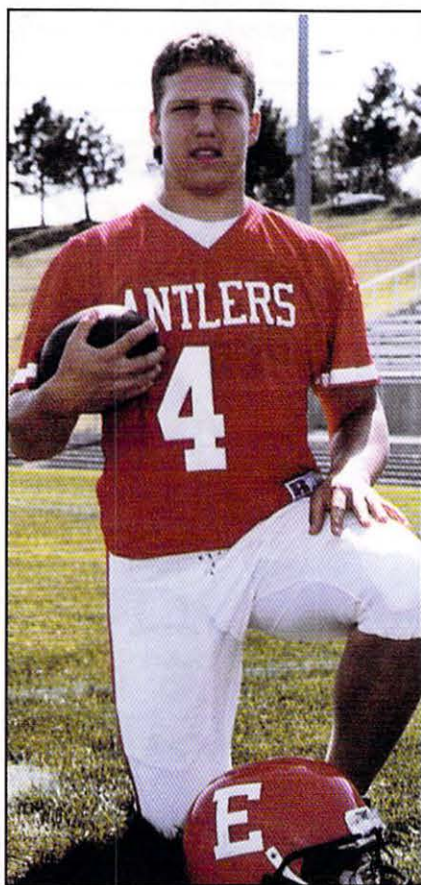
Husker coaches get the chance to work closely with prospects

By Doug Horwich

After an early commitment from standout Central High wide receiver Mark LeFlore, Nebraska concluded spring football and turned its attention toward its summer football camps, hoping to secure at least a few more oral commitments before the start of the season.

The Huskers have traditionally relied on their summer camps to evaluate hundreds of potential scholarship and walk-on prospects in person, and this year was no exception.

The camps give the coaches an opportunity to work closely with the players in position-specific drills, gauge their competitiveness and willingness to be coached and evaluate their athletic skills. Camp participants also take the Performance Index, which measures a player's performance in the 40-yard dash, 10-



Jay Moore's strong performance at NU's summer camp led to a scholarship offer from the Huskers.

yard dash, vertical jump and pro agility run. The test factors in the player's weight and gives the coach-

es a reference point from which to judge a prospect's overall athletic ability.

Although the four camp sessions are open to anyone who wishes to attend, many top prospects from around the country receive handwritten invitations, and Nebraska's camp has a history of attracting some of the finest players in the nation on an annual basis. This year was no exception, as a number of top-rated players made their way to Lincoln.

Although the Nebraska coaches adopted a new policy of not offering any prospects at camp, a number of participants returned home to find Husker offers waiting in their mailbox.

One such player was defensive end/running back Jay Moore (6-4 1/2, 245, 4.7) of Elkhorn High School. Husker coaches targeted Moore early as a rush end prospect, and his strong camp performance only solidified their decision to offer a scholarship.

After not signing any rush ends last year, the Nebraska staff has made the position a top priority for the 2002 recruiting class, and although they will still look to sign one or two more rush ends this year, they'll rest easier knowing that Moore is already on board.

Moore, who picked the Huskers over Iowa and Iowa State, was relieved to finally make his decision.

"I've always been a Husker fan," he said. "It would have been hard to tell them no. The coaches say that I could play a number of spots on defense. They said that they might start me out at SAM linebacker, or maybe defensive end."

Another in-state player who attended Nebraska's camp was offen-

Nebraska Commitments for 2002

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Curt Dukes	Newton (Newton-Conover), N.C.	6-2	210	QB
Matt Herian	Pierce, Neb.	6-5	225	TE
Mark LeFlore	Omaha (Central), Neb.	6-0	185	WR
Kurt Mann	Grand Island, Neb.	6-4 1/2	255	OL
Jay Moore	Elkhorn, Neb.	6-4 1/2	245	RE

sive tackle Kurt Mann (6-4 1/2, 255, 5.3) from Grand Island High School. Mann is an outstanding three-sport athlete who has a 30 1/2-inch vertical jump and also excels at basketball and track and field.

Although he will have to add roughly 30-40 pounds to play on the offensive line at Nebraska, the Husker coaches feel that he will be able to add the weight, and really like his athleticism. Mann has been a life-long fan of the Husker program and was excited to call Coach Solich with his decision in June.

"I received the scholarship offer from Nebraska on Friday, and I called Coach (Dan) Young and let him know I was coming," Mann said. "He was happy and told me that they were happy to have me. Nebraska is a good football team, and I live in the state. I've been a fan of the program for as long as I can remember. This was the place I've known that I wanted to go to, so it was an easy decision."

Another goal for the Husker staff this year was to secure a commitment from one of their top quarterback prospects. One player whom they had their eye on in the spring was Curt Dukes (6-2, 210, 4.7) from Newton-Conover High School in Newton, N.C.

Dukes came to Nebraska's football camp on a mission to prove that he was one of the top run/pass quarterback prospects in the nation and put on an impressive display at the Husker camp. In addition to demonstrating advanced skills in running the option, Dukes was equally impressive throwing the football, where he showcased outstanding accuracy and arm strength.

Dukes later attended camps at Notre Dame and Penn State and was offered personally by Coach Joe Paterno at the Penn State camp.

After nearly a month of deliberation, Dukes finally made his decision, choosing the Huskers over Penn State, Duke and North Carolina State. Although he was very impressed by Penn State and received substantial pressure to stay in-state, Dukes ultimately came to the conclusion that the Husker offense was the best fit for his skills.

Dukes led Newton-Conover to a 12-3 record and an appearance in the

Lots of Talent Right at Home

By Rick Shaw

If you are looking for offensive firepower in the high school ranks, the State of Nebraska may be a good place to stop in 2001. Nebraska boasts some of the most impressive offensive skill athletes in the entire country.

Wide receiver Mark LeFlore of Omaha Central and tight end Matt Herian of Pierce have already given their commitments to attend Nebraska. Both rank in the top 20 at their positions on a national level.

David Horne, a 6-foot-0, 195 pound running back out of Omaha Central is on the Cornhuskers' early wish list. Horne rushed for 1,350 yards and scored 17 touchdowns as a junior and was a first-team All-State selection in 2000. He is widely considered one of the top 10 running back prospects in the country heading into the 2001 season and has made a number of preseason national top-100 lists.

Horne has already garnered multiple scholarship offers but appears to favor Colorado, Michigan, Nebraska, Iowa, and Notre Dame early in the recruiting process. "I already have a visit set up to Colorado for Thanksgiving weekend to watch the Nebraska game," Horne said. "I will probably also visit Nebraska and Michigan officially during the season as well."

Horne is open to the recruiting process and said that he will not make a decision until he has taken all five of his allotted official visits. The Buffaloes have made a great early impression with Horne and may be the early front-runner for his services. However, Horne admitted that he would like to play his college football close to home, which may give the Huskers a leg up in the race.

"I'd like to play close enough to home that my parents can see me play every week," Horne said. "My dad won't fly, so whatever school I go to will need to be within moderate driving distance. Nebraska is not more than an hour away."

Another talented prospect out of Omaha who Nebraska has its eyes on is Stevie Hicks of Omaha Creighton Prep. Hicks, a 6-foot-2, 215-pound running back/linebacker prospect, has already been offered scholarships by Iowa and Iowa State.

"Nebraska wants to see a transcript of my first-quarter grades before they offer," Hicks said.

Hicks' ultimate decision will likely be influenced by what position he wants to play in college. Iowa, Iowa State and others like him at running back, while Nebraska is recruiting him as a linebacker.

"I probably like running back best," Hicks said. "If Nebraska had offered me at running back, I probably would have already committed to them. My family are big fans of Nebraska, and I have two cousins (DeAntae Grixby and DeWayne Long Jr.) who currently play for NU. I'm not sure which way I'll go now. I'll probably make a decision by mid-season."

Other Nebraska skill-position athletes receiving Division I recruiting interest include running back/safety Mark Brungardt (6-1, 195) of Norfolk Catholic, receiver Marlon Carter (5-9, 175) of Omaha Central, running back/receiver Mike Ritchie (5-11, 175) of Lincoln Southeast and fullback Dane Todd (5-11 1/2, 230) of Lincoln Southeast. All four are getting early looks from the NU staff.

In addition to Husker commitments Kurt Mann (offensive lineman) of Grand Island and Jay Moore (defensive end/linebacker) of Elkhorn, there are several other Nebraska high school stars who work the trenches and are enjoying early recruiting attention.

Linebacker Andy Kadavy (6-1, 212) of Seward has already had a scholarship offer from California. Defensive lineman Nick Leaders (6-2 1/2, 260) of Millard West accepted a scholarship offer from Iowa State in June. Offensive lineman Cory Timm (6-5, 290) of Yutan, and offensive lineman Jamar Dorsey (6-3, 315) of Omaha Central are two other linemen to watch. ■

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North Carolina Class 2A state championship game last season. He posted impressive numbers in his first year as a starter, rushing for 1,514 yards and 19 touchdowns and passing for 810 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Husker coaches informed him that they would not pursue any additional quarterbacks in this class, and subsequently withdrew offers to a number of top national prospects.

Dukes has drawn comparisons to Scott Frost in terms of his size and the way in which he runs the option.

Although Nebraska is currently loaded at the tight end position, the top three players on the depth chart will have graduated by the time the 2003 season rolls around, prompting the Husker coaches to look to sign a tight end prospect in this year's class.

Fortunately, they had the luxury of having one of the nation's top prospects right in their own backyard in Pierce High School's Matt Herian (6-5, 225, 4.8). Herian showcased his outstanding athleticism and receiving skills at the Husker camp, catching virtually everything in sight and posting one of the top Performance Index scores ever recorded at the camp, highlighted by a 36 1/2-inch vertical jump.

"I called Coach Solich and told him that I was coming to Nebraska," Herian said. "He's really excited about it. He told me that he was glad that I chose them. I went down to talk to the coaches,, and I realized that was where I wanted to be. I kind of knew that is where I wanted to be, but I wanted to sleep on it before announcing.

"My family is happy. They are all Nebraska fans."

In addition to his exploits on the football field, Herian also excels at basketball and track, with a personal best time of 10.7 seconds in the 100-meter dash, a 52-foot throw in the shot and a best of 150 feet in the discus. Herian chose the Huskers over Iowa State, Iowa and Purdue.

With a total of five oral commitments going into the season, Nebraska has filled roughly a quarter of its 2002 recruiting class. It will now begin setting up official recruiting visits and already has some of the nation's top players scheduled to come to Lincoln during the weekend of the Notre Dame game. ■

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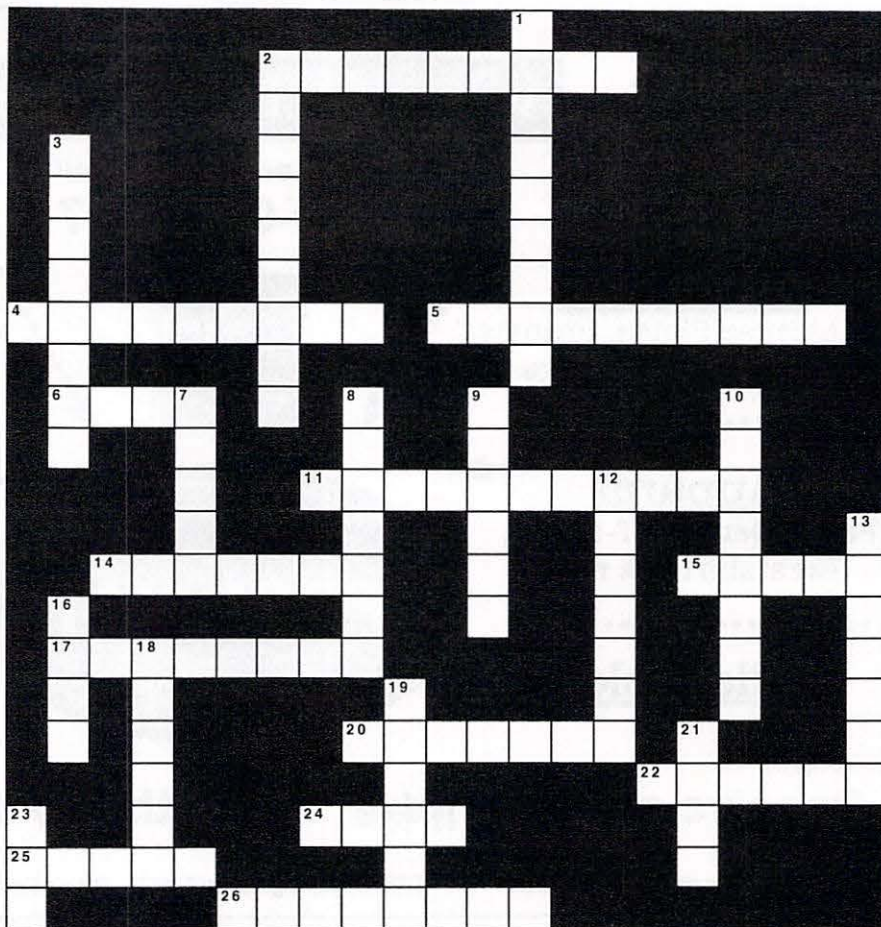
ACROSS

- 2 Homecoming opponent
- 4 Sept. 8 opponent
- 5 NU's No. 66
- 6 NU true freshman middle linebacker
- 11 Nov. 10 opponent
- 14 NU's No. 56
- 15 NU's No. 5 (defense)
- 17 Oct. 27 opponent
- 20 NU's No. 1 (offense)
- 22 NU's offensive coordinator
- 24 Michael Booker's younger brother
- 25 NU athletic director
- 26 NU's deep snapper

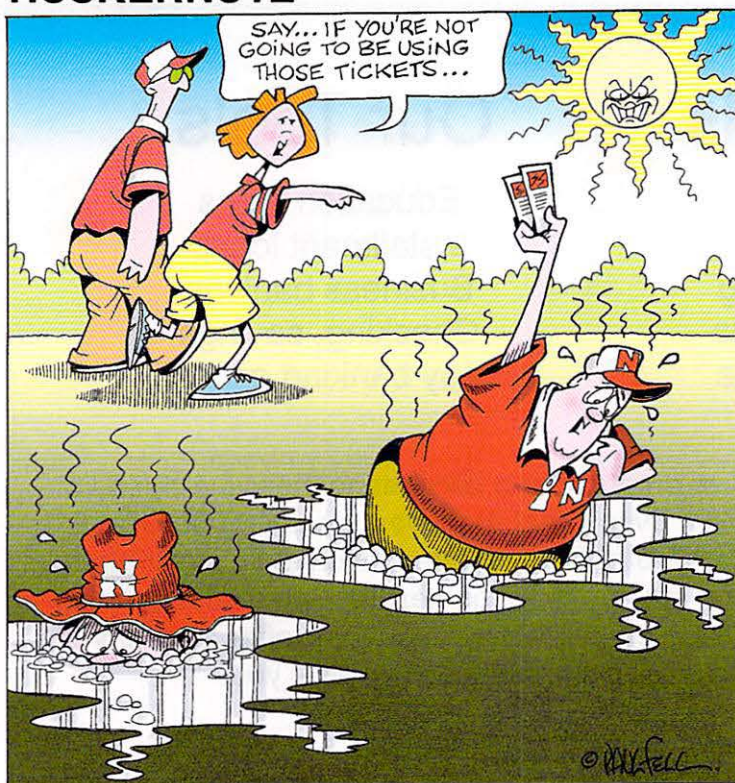
DOWN

- 1 First 2002 road opponent
- 2 Sept. 1 opponent
- 3 First road opponent
- 7 Notre Dame coach
- 8 Troy State location
- 9 Grant Wistrom's younger brother
- 10 I-back suspended for TCU game
- 12 Troy State nickname
- 13 NU's final 200 ranking
- 16 NU's defensive coordinator
- 18 NU's punter
- 19 NU's No. 77
- 21 NU's No. 58
- 23 Network for Notre Dame game

Answers in Sept. 8 issue



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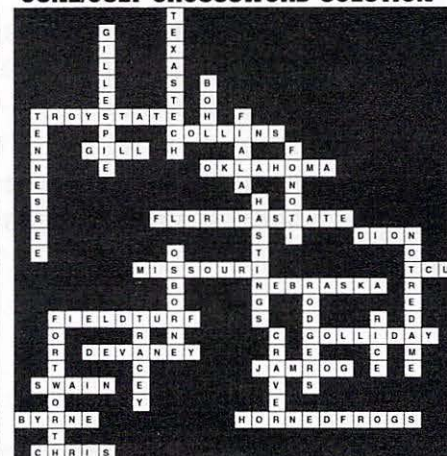
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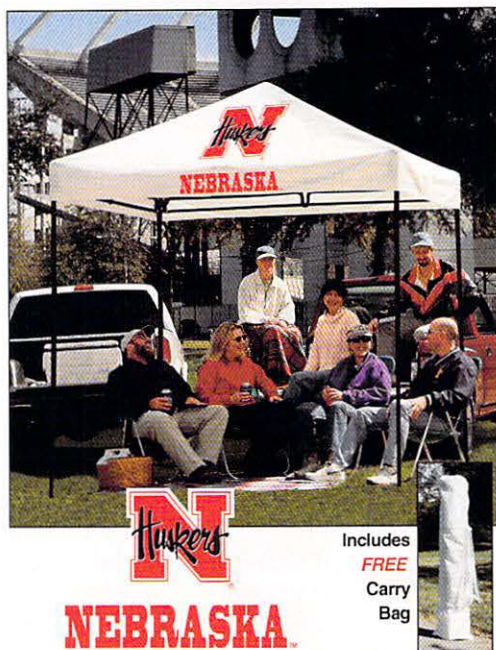
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A Lot On The Line

Offense's struggles in opener make Troy State week more important



Mike BABCOCK

EVEN THOUGH TROY STATE, a newcomer to NCAA Division I-A football, is next up, this week's practices are critical to Nebraska's offensive line, according to senior Jon Rutherford.

Conventional coaching wisdom says that a team improves the most between its first and second games. And "I hope so," Rutherford said following the Cornhuskers' 21-7 victory against TCU.

"A lot of people might say this isn't going to be a big week. It's not Notre Dame. But for us, because we didn't execute today, this is probably one of the biggest weeks of the year.

"We've got to prove to ourselves that we can take care of what other teams give us."

The offensive line didn't take care of what the Horned Frogs gave it defensively. And as a result, "we weren't producing like we expected to," said Rutherford, who started at right guard.

Perhaps the best statistical measure of the offensive line's production is rushing yardage, and Nebraska managed only 159 yards on 50 carries, an average of 3.2 yards per attempt.

On 15 of those 50 rushes, the ball carrier was tackled for a loss.

The problem? "I think a lot of it was mental, execution," tackle Dave Volk said.

Southern Mississippi was the last to stuff Nebraska's ground game to such a degree, in the third game of the 1999 season. The Cornhuskers rushed for just 119 yards, one week after rushing for 114 yards against California. On the strength of some adjustments the offensive line made then, they finished the season ranked fourth in the nation in rushing, averaging 265.9 yards per game.

Rutherford was a back-up offensive tackle then. Volk was the starter on the other side.

TCU's defensive schemes didn't surprise Nebraska, or at least they shouldn't have. But "we didn't pick things up very well inside on some of the running game," said Coach Frank Solich.

"It seemed like there was a lot of penetration at times."

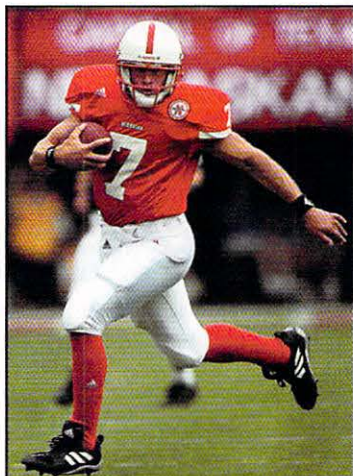
TCU's defense is familiar with what the Cornhuskers do because "we practice against the same kind of offense," Horned Frogs Coach Gary Patterson said. "Once we got our option responsibilities down, we felt like one of the

things people are scared to do against the option is . . . to blitz it.

"Because we play against it every day in practice, we understand a little bit more about it. So we were able to take some chances and got fortunate on some plays and got some lost yardage. You have to play Nebraska. You can't just sit there in zone (coverage) and play a base front all the time.

"You have to create some lost-yardage plays, and for most of the game we were able to do that."

The Horned Frogs were able to for most of the game, but not all of it. Nebraska drove 70 yards on six plays to a touchdown on its first possession, before TCU could adjust, and then drove 98 yards on 10 plays for a touchdown late in the third quarter, to eliminate any suspense there might have been.



Quarterback Eric Crouch said the offense "hasn't gotten as many reps as we usually get."

Quarterback Eric Crouch mixed passes and runs to take the Cornhuskers down the field, after a TCU punt had left them in the shadow of their own goal posts — with the score 13-7.

"That's what happens when you don't make mistakes," said Volk.

Some of the mistakes could be attributed to first-game jitters as well as to a lack of repetitions during practice, according to Volk. Because the opener was played before classes started at the university, only 105 players could report. And that limited the number of practice stations.

"It was a little bit different," Volk said. "It affected the whole routine."

Crouch concurred. "We haven't gotten as many reps as we usually get," he said.

The 98-yard touchdown drive will provide a place to start when work begins for Troy State on Monday. "I think it will help us a lot. It gave us something positive to look at," Rutherford said. "When we worked together, we got things done. It doesn't matter who you're playing, if you have mental breakdowns, you're going to not execute. That's what we have to get ironed out, to communicate better."

The line didn't adjust as well as it has, or will. "We'll have that ironed out, real quick," said Volk.

This is a critical week of practice for the Cornhusker offensive line. Most of the 77,473 who watched the opening game would agree, because as the line goes, so goes the offense.

And the offense will need to go better than it did against TCU when Notre Dame visits in week three. ■

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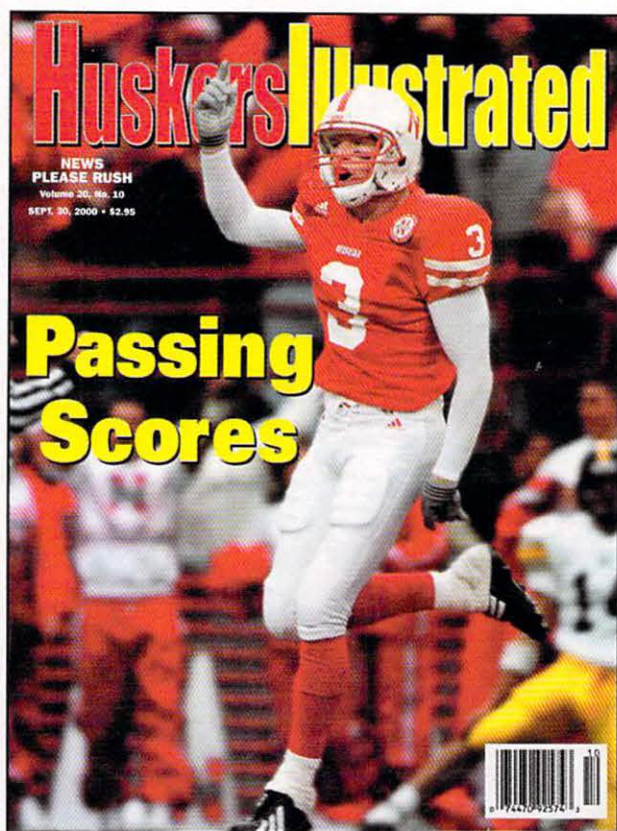
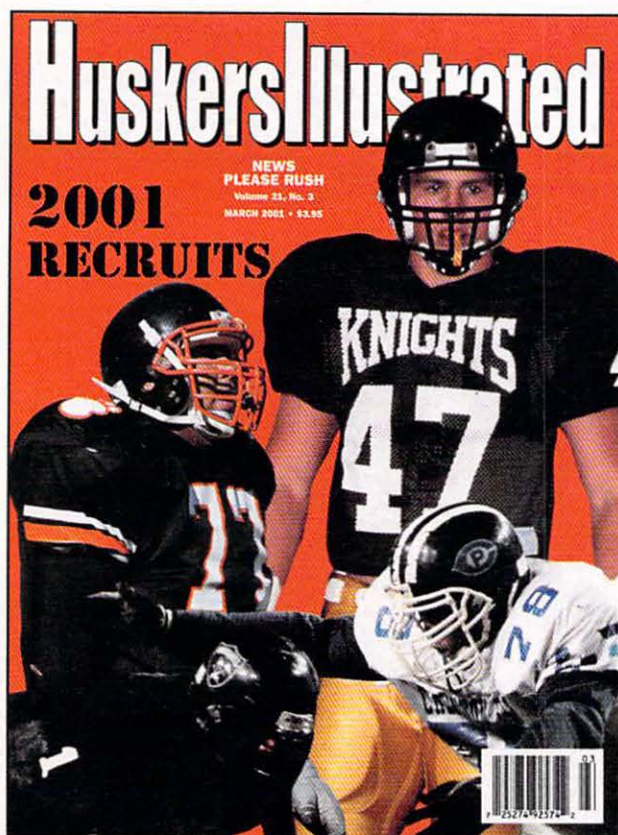


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